

# Eczema and Wet Wraps Information - Children's Hospital in the Home (CHITH)

## What is eczema?

- Eczema is a common skin condition that usually begins before your child is one year old. The affected skin is dry, red and itchy. Sometimes these areas of skin can become cracked, weepy and then scab over.
- Unfortunately, there is no cure for eczema. However, there are many ways to keep eczema under control and help your child feel more comfortable. Eczema is not contagious.
- Babies usually develop eczema on their face, while older children tend to develop it on the inside of their elbows, behind their knees and on their wrists, ankles and knees.
- Eczema can lead to areas of infection, inflammation and scarring caused by intense scratching.
- Eczema usually improves with age.

## What causes eczema?

- The cause of eczema is unknown, although it can run in families.
- Eczema damages the skin, so it becomes irritated and loses moisture quickly.

Eczema can be triggered by a number of things, such as:

- becoming overheated with clothing, blankets, heaters.
- dryness of the skin.
- irritation from soaps, detergents, fabrics or other chemicals.
- food allergies or intolerances.
- allergies to environmental allergens, such as dust mites, plant pollens or animal fur.
- viruses and other common infections.

## Treatment

### Bleach Bath

- During a flare of eczema, a daily bleach bath can help to remove bacteria from skin.
- The bath should be lukewarm, not hot.
- Add 12 mL of plain 'White King' household bleach for every 10 litres (1 household bucket) of bath water.
- Diluted bleach is not harmful and is much less than Chlorine in public swimming pools.
- After the bath, do not rinse of the skin. Gently pat dry with a towel. It is okay if the skin remains damp.
- Do not use soaps, body washes and any creams containing alcohol. These will dry out the skin.

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## Corticosteroid Creams

- Apply this cream **first**.
- Apply to areas of skin that are red and irritated.

Your child has been prescribed:

- For face \_\_\_\_\_ Twice a day
- For body \_\_\_\_\_ Once a day

## Moisturisers (emollients)

- Apply moisturisers **after** steroid creams.
- Moisturisers create a barrier to stop moisture loss and repair the skin e.g. Paraffin / Sorbolene / QV.
- Moisturisers help to make the skin less itchy and flare ups less frequent.
- Apply a lot of moisturiser to all affected areas at least twice a day. Some children will need 4-6 times per day.
- Always use a clean plastic spoon or wooden spatula to remove the emollient from the jar to avoid any contamination.

## Wet Wraps

- Wet wraps help keep skin moist and help absorb creams better.
- Wet wraps help prevent scratching.
- Wet wraps should be re-applied **twice daily**, preferably in the morning and prior to bedtime.
- Tubifast sizes chosen should ensure a snug fit which is not too tight and comfortable to wear.
  - One (1) length of tubifast is to be placed in a bowl of water, very gently squeezed and applied while still wet. The first layer of tubifast should always be kept wet so it does not stick to the skin. It may be kept moist by using a dedicated spray bottle of water.
  - Another length of tubifast is to be applied over the wet one. Ensure that both layers are flat.
- When using cotton singlets – one (1) is to be applied wet and the other dry.
- Your child can wear normal clothing over wet wraps.
- Wet wraps should be thrown away if worn for any infected eczema. When infection has cleared, wet wraps may be washed in hot water.
- Avoid any tight fitting or synthetic clothing e.g. polyester / nylon / polar fleece. Cotton or cotton blend clothing is preferred.

## Treating Face

- Hydrocortisone 1% creams can be applied to red areas of the face as needed.
- Moisturiser is then applied on top.
- Cool compress (wet face washer) can be held on face as necessary.

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## Treatment at Home with CHITH

- Your child will be visited each day by the CHITH Nurse who will:
  - assess child's skin,
  - replenish supplies if needed,
  - give advice on when to stop treatment.
- You will be supplied with tubifast and paraffin.
- Wet wraps will need to be applied twice daily. CHITH nurses will be able to assist with the morning wet wrap if needed.

## Follow up

Your child will need a follow up appointment. This will be arranged prior to transfer to home on CHITH.

**OPD/GP Appointment:** Clinic \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm

### WHEN TO CONTACT A DOCTOR

- Pain not improved by rest or medicine
- Excessive nausea and vomiting
- Unable to eat or drink
- Increasing swelling, redness, discharge or other signs of infection
- High fevers over 38 degrees
- New Rash

**Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns**

## Contact details - CHITH

- Children's Hospital in the Home Nurse: 7:30am – 4:00pm Tel: 0438 897 684
- Children's Inpatient Unit – Team Leader: 4:00pm – 7:30am Tel: 5687 1238

**Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service**  
**Women's, Newborn and Children's Services**  
Email: [chithgoldcoast@health.qld.gov.au](mailto:chithgoldcoast@health.qld.gov.au)  
For more information visit: [www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.goldcoast.health.qld.gov.au)