

FAQS

Caring for your baby or small child with eczema

Why does my child have eczema?

Eczema is a skin condition that some people are born with, and the cause is unknown. What we do know is:



Genetics is one reason, as eczema seems to run in some families.



The immune system is overactive



The skin is not as protective and watertight as it should be.

It is important to understand that you could not stop your baby having eczema. But there are a lot of steps you can take to reduce the effect eczema has on your child.

Could food or formula be affecting my child's eczema?



In newborns and babies, **food is rarely the cause of eczema**. This includes food eaten by a breastfeeding mother.



Do not remove foods from your child's diet or change their formula **unless they are showing clear signs of an allergic reaction** such as swelling of face, lips or eyes, hives or welts on the skin, tingling mouth, abdominal (stomach) pain, or vomiting. These signs will typically show up within 30 minutes of eating the food.



Always talk with your health professional if you are concerned your child has food allergies and **before** you change your baby's formula or remove foods from your child's diet.

What are 5 things I can do to help manage my child's eczema?

Moisturise



Bathing



Minimise Triggers



Treat Flares



Seek Help



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What else should I know ?

Moisturise

Eczema can make skin feel dry, rough and itchy. Dry skin can lead to new flares or make eczema harder to manage. Moisturising all over, every day helps lock in the moisture and keep out things that make eczema worse.

*Important to know!



AVOID moisturisers that contain food-related products (like nuts, paw paw, coconut or milk). Putting food containing products on eczema or broken skin may increase the chance of your child developing food sensitivities or allergies.

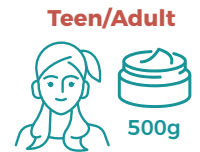


AVOID essential oils, aqueous creams with sodium laurel sulphate or products with benzalkonium chloride. These items may irritate or dry-out eczema-prone skin. Always check the ingredients list before using skincare products on your child.

HOW TO USE MOISTURISERS: You need to use lots of moisturiser on your child. Moisturise the whole body including face. You should be using about 125g for a baby or 250g for a child each week.

You cannot over-moisturise your child.

How much
moisturiser
per week?



Bathing

Wash your child in lukewarm water for less than 5 minutes once a day. Adding bath products isn't necessary, but if you do make sure they are soap-free and do not contain food-related ingredients.

Minimise Triggers

It is uncommon for food to be the cause of eczema. If acidic foods irritate your child's skin on contact, try using petroleum jelly on the skin around the mouth before eating. This creates a skin barrier. **Here are some more common triggers:**



Soaps, bubble baths, shampoos, fragranced washing powders and fabric softeners



Getting too hot



Prickly fabrics (wool) or synthetics (nylon)



Heavily chlorinated indoor pools and spas



Sand, carpet or grass



Dribbling, teething (babies)



Scratching

Treat Flares

When your child's skin gets sore and itchy, it's called a flare. **Don't worry! There are safe medicines called flare control treatments that can help.** These are usually topical corticosteroid ointments and they're safe to use, even for little babies and children. Learn more about these treatments in our [Eczema Care Online Toolkit](#) and the [Eczema Care Plan](#).

Seek Help

Eczema is a long-term skin condition that needs regular care, and you will need support for you and your child. While eczema cannot be cured, there are tools and support services to help you manage. Speak with your health professionals regularly and find more information through **Eczema Support Australia**; a support network for Australians living with or affected by eczema eczemasupport.org.au

When to contact your health professional.

- If your child's eczema shows signs of infection, such as increased redness, feeling warm, looks crusty or is weeping.
- If you and/or your child are struggling or exhausted
- If your child's eczema is not responding to the agreed treatment or is getting worse

Eczema Care Plan

The Eczema Care Plan is a helpful tool to help you work out with health professionals what steps you can take to make life better with eczema.

