

## NSW mum urges others to follow eczema ‘golden rules’



An NSW mum is urging other parents to follow the golden rules of treating eczema after experiencing severe eczema that left her two-year-old looking like a vampire had been feasting on him.

“Our toddler walking towards us with blood dripping everywhere is a sight we will never forget,” says Adriana who reached crisis point last year.

“We would hold his hands to stop him scratching at open sores, and tried all sorts of creams, but it had got so bad that he had stopped smiling. Nothing was working.”

The family had tried everything, including removing carpets and replacing bedding to avoid triggering his eczema. But they could see that his eczema was severe and getting worse.

“After months of broken sleep, and working full time, I knew none of us could go on any longer.”

When she was told that there was nothing else her local hospital could do to help, Adriana decided she had to go to Sydney. “I just couldn’t do this anymore. I needed help.”

As she was packing to drive to Sydney Children’s Hospital, she answered a phone call from a client, who hearing her distress said, “hang on, I’ll get my sister to call you”.

It turned out that his sister was Melanie Funk, a Gold Coast mum, who had struggled with her newborn twins’ severe eczema more than a decade ago. The experience led Melanie to set up Eczema Support Australia.

“Melanie just let me talk to her as I drove to Sydney. I told her everything we tried wasn’t working and we just couldn’t cope any longer.”

“I’ll never forget what Melanie said next. She said it was about managing the eczema flares, not eradicating them. It is possible to get on top of the flare, but you can’t stop the underlying eczema.”

The doctors at Sydney Children’s Hospital showed Adriana how to use steroid creams correctly to treat her son’s eczema flares. Up until this point, Adriana said she didn’t realise how much misinformation about eczema there is.





“I had been using pea sized amounts of the steroid flare cream because I was scared to use too much for too long – but it was underusing the steroid cream which meant the flares weren’t going away and the eczema was getting worse.

“The doctors at Sydney Children’s Hospital told me if I needed to use the whole tube of steroid cream to treat the affected skin, I should use the whole tube. And they were right. My son’s eczema was really that bad.

“It was only by using the steroid flare cream generously from when the flare first started until the flare subsided on all the affected skin, that I was able to clear up his skin.”

Adriana is now urging other parents to use steroid flare cream correctly in the right quantity and for the duration of the flare on all affected skin until the skin feels smooth and itch-free.

Her routine of using steroid cream generously (on affected skin only) and moisturising the skin (with non-steroidal cream) every day including during flares and between flares has made a world of difference.

Melanie Funk said that Adriana’s experience mirrors her own experience struggling with her newborn twins’ eczema more than a decade ago. “There is still a lot of suffering due to people not using steroid creams correctly. That’s why Eczema Support Australia has launched an online toolkit and Eczema Care Plan.

“Steroid flare creams are very effective when used on affected skin to treat a flare – so it is devastating to hear of people underusing steroid flare creams and enduring worsening eczema,” said Ms Funk.



“The golden rule is to use steroid flare creams on all affected skin as soon as a flare starts, and to stop using it when the skin is smooth and itch free. Alongside this, the medical advice is to use a moisturiser (non-steroid creams) during a flare and between flares.

“We also encourage anyone dealing with eczema to download our Eczema Care Plan from our website,” Ms Funk added.

Adriana said, “Even my GP said “wow” when I showed them how much steroid cream I needed to use.”

“This doesn’t mean the eczema doesn’t come back. But using the steroid flare cream generously on all affected skin as soon as I know a flare is coming and until the skin is itch free, has reduced the number of flares and how long they last.”



Adriana says the biggest change is that her three-year-old son is smiling again. “I didn’t realise how sad he had become. It should never have got this bad.”

More information on the eczema golden rules can be found [here](#).  
The Eczema Care Plan is [here](#)

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