

## DAILY MAINTENANCE FOR ECZEMA

THIS HANDOUT TELLS YOU HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR CHILD'S SKIN EVERY DAY EVEN IF IT IS NOT ITCHY AND DOES NOT HAVE A RASH. DAILY TREATMENT WILL DECREASE THE NUMBER OF TIMES YOUR CHILD WILL HAVE A FLARE OF ATOPIC DERMATITIS. SAVE THIS INFORMATION.

1. Bathe daily in warm, not hot, water for at least 10 minutes.
2. Soap only the dirtiest parts of the skin. Even mild soaps dry out skin. The best soaps include: Dove and Carers (no color or fragrance). Non-Soap Cleansers are also good for the skin: Cetaphil, Aveeno, or Aquaphor.
3. Softly pat dry after the bath.
4. Moisturize your child's skin two times a day: once in the morning and once in the evening. One of those times should be within 3 minutes of getting out of the bath. Get the moisturizer on before the wrinkles on the fingers disappear. NEVER take a bath without applying moisturizer.

Ointments are the most effective in keeping the skin from drying out, but they may also trap sweat and irritate your child's skin, especially if it is hot outside. Examples of good ointments include: VEGETABLE SHORTENING (CRISCO IN A TUB) AND AQUAPHOR.

Creams and lotions do not work as well as ointments at keeping the skin moist and may have preservatives that irritate the skin, but they may be easier to apply and not leave grease marks on furniture and clothing. Good lotions include: AVEENO, CUREL NEUTROGENA, MOISTUREL, EUCERIN CREAM, KERI, LUBIDERM, NIVEA, NUTRADERM.

Petroleum Jelly (VASELINE) does a great job of trapping the water in your child's skin after a bath so that the skin stays moist, but it does not do a good job of moisturizing your child's skin all by itself. Vaseline is only useful after a bath.

YOU MAY NEED TO TRY DIFFERENT BRANDS OF OINTMENTS OR CREAMS BEFORE YOU FIND THE ONE THAT WORKS FOR YOU. WHAT WORKS IN THE SUMMER MAY NOT BE THE BEST ONE FOR THE WINTER.

Avoid triggers. Some children's eczema is made worse by wool or scratchy clothes, excessive heat, sweating, excessive cold, dry air, chlorine, bubble baths, and grass. Cotton clothes and humidifiers in the winter can help prevent eczema flares in some children.

## TREATMENT FOR ECZEMA / ATOPIC DERMATITIS

### RED SKIN/ECZEMA FLARE

BODY:

- Apply a small amount of steroid ointment/cream, \_\_\_\_\_ to all red areas on your child's body \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ times per day until all the redness is gone. Then, gradually decrease the number of daily applications over the next 1-2 weeks.
- If your child develops thick areas of skin, or plaques, apply a small amount of steroid ointment/cream, \_\_\_\_\_ to localized area of thick skin \_\_\_\_\_ times per day for \_\_\_\_\_ days.

### DRY SKIN

- Apply lots of lubricating cream or lotion, such as Vaseline Petroleum, Eucerin Cream, Aquaphor, or Lubiderm to all your skin after the steroid ointment has been applied. Put on more cream or lotion between each steroid application to keep the skin from drying out.
- If topical steroids are not needed, keep using a lubricating cream or lotion twice a day to prevent dry skin.
- A daily lukewarm bath or shower is fine. Soap is not necessary. Apply the steroid (if needed) and/or the lubricating cream or lotion right after getting out of the bath or shower while your child's skin is still damp.

### ITCHY SKIN

- Use Benadryl (generic is fine) as directed. It may make your child sleepy at first.
- Redness and dryness cause itchy skin. Follow the instructions above to control redness and dryness.
- Keep cool. (Your child will itch more when too warm or hot.)
  1. Dress your child in loose-fitting clothing. Covered skin itches less.
  2. Keep your child's bedroom cool at night and keep covers either off or at a minimum (a sheet only or a sheet and a light cotton blanket).
  3. When an itch develops, encourage your child to resist scratching. Apply something cold, such as an ice cube, wet cloth, or just cold water (cooling stops itching).

### OTHER HELPFUL HINTS

- Try washing your child's clothes with a "fragrance free" laundry powder.
- Try putting your child's clothes through the rinse cycle twice.
- Do NOT use fabric softener or anti-static shells in the dryer.
- Keep wool away from your child's skin: this means blankets, clothing, stuffed animals and mattress pads. Use cotton clothing, sheets, blankets and pillowcases as much as possible.