



Highlands
Integrative
Pediatrics

Eczema

The Basics: Eczema is characterized by dry, raised, red, itchy skin that can range from mild (a few patches) to severe (covering most of the body). It is essentially exaggerated dry skin, and those who are prone to it seem to be less able to produce oils in their skin to keep it from drying out. The dryness leads to itching and then to the red, raised rash. We say it is an “itch that rashes” rather than a “rash that itches” because it is the itching that can worsen the rash. Colonization of bacteria on the skin is also thought to contribute to worsening eczema.

Kids with eczema are somewhat more likely to develop seasonal allergies and asthma. There are some studies suggesting that good management of eczema at a young age decreases the risk of subsequent allergies and asthma.

Nutrition:

- Probiotics taken by pregnant and nursing moms may decrease the chance of developing eczema.
- Probiotics taken by infants and children may improve eczema. Our recommendations are:
 - 0-2 months: Gerber Soothe Colic drops 5 drops/day or Bio Gaia baby probiotic 5 drops/day or Jarrow Baby's Jarrodophilus drops (3 drops/day)
 - 2-6 months: Garden of Life Kids RAW ¼ tsp/day or Jarrow: baby's Jarrodophilus 1/8 tsp/day
 - 6-12 months: Garden of Life Kids RAW ½ tsp/day or Jarrow: Baby's Jarrodophilus ¼ tsp/day
 - >12 months: Garden of Life Kids RAW ¾ tsp/day or Jarrow: Baby's Jarrodophilus ¼ tsp/day
- Kids under 1 year are more likely to have a dietary trigger that exacerbates their eczema.
 - We suggest a one month trial off dairy for nursing moms and for infants who eat solids.
 - Other foods that may trigger include soy, egg, wheat (gluten), and corn.
- Omega-3s are good for the skin. Our recommendations are:
 - Nursing moms can take 1000mg of total omega-3 (fish oil or flax)
 - Infants 6 -12 months: 250 mg Nordic Naturals infant DHA or Spectrum Kids DHA (flax)
 - Kids 1-3 years old: 500 mg total omega-3 (Nordic Naturals, Barlean's, Spectrum)
 - Kids 3-5 years old: 750 mg total omega-3
 - Kids 5+ years old: 1000 mg total omega-3

Conventional

- Emollient: Thick ointments or creams help to replace the missing oil barrier in the skin. Frequent use of emollients like coconut oil, shea butter, Aquaphor, Vanicream, Vaniply, Badger Balm, Vaseline or Un-petroleum Jelly is essential in the care of eczema. Use one of these 4-6 times/day.
- Bathing - There are 2 schools of thought (the second seems to work well in Colorado):
 - Bathe very infrequently to avoid drying out the skin.
 - Bathe every night, soap only once a week (unscented), and after bath, apply emollient to damp skin (don't dry off your baby completely) to seal in moisture.
- Anti-inflammatory:
 - 1% hydrocortisone ointment (over the counter); thin layer applied 1-2 times/day.
 - Stronger prescription ointments (Desonide, Synalar).
- Wet wrap therapy: see video from National Jewish: www.nationaljewish.org (search "wet wrap")

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- Calendula oil is an herbal anti-inflammatory that can take the place of conventional anti-inflammatory ointments in some cases of eczema.
 - Apply 2 times/day in addition to or in place of hydrocortisone type ointments.
 - Weleda calendula oil or baby cream
- Acupuncture
 - Brittany Lark, acupuncturist: sees patients at H.I.P in a community acupuncture setting. She practices needling acupuncture (Shonishin) for kids that are too young or have needle phobia. Call 303.883.0878 to set up a session.
 - Cammy Polson, acupuncturist and aromatherapy specialist, works with older kids for acupuncture and teaches aromatherapy classes at H.I.P. Contact her at cammy@dna-acupuncture.com.