

Woman, Child and Family Service – Paediatrics
Tauranga Hospital
Cameron Road Private Bag 12024
Tauranga NEW ZEALAND

Re: Eczema

Eczema is a common condition in children. The majority of children with eczema can be managed by their General Practitioner.

The mainstay of treatment is regular moisturising. Emollients should be applied several times a day to the body and **continued even when the eczema has cleared**. The emollient should be smoothed, not rubbed on, in the direction of hair growth. They can be allowed to soak in. If an emollient irritates or is disliked by the child then an alternative should be offered. Increased use of emollients has been associated with improved eczema and the reduced need for topical steroids.

Baths once daily are recommended. The water should be warm and the bath should last no more than 10 to 15 minutes. Emollients should be used instead of soap and shampoo. Bath oils help moisturise the skin but can make the bath slippery and need to be used with caution. Regular antiseptic baths twice daily with diluted bleach may reduce staphylococcal carriage and improve eczema. Skin should be patted dry after bathing.

Most children's eczema isn't triggered by food. If food is eliminated it should be done so under medical supervision. Allergy testing is not recommended as it does not predict foods that make eczema worse.

The benefits of steroid creams should be discussed with the family, emphasizing that benefits outweigh possible harms when used correctly. We recommend a mild potency hydrocortisone for mild eczema and for the face and neck. A moderate potency steroid can be used for moderate eczema and for short-term use.

Information on eczema management, bleach baths, eczema care plans Can be found at <https://starship.org.nz/guidelines/eczema> under the section "Information for Families".

If after the family has been following this advice, you still have concerns about the eczema, please send us a new referral.

Ngā mihi

Yours sincerely

Electronically signed

Paediatric Team

Eczema

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