



Sound Dermatology

ECZEMA

What Is Eczema?

Eczema is a common condition that causes the skin to become dry, itchy, and inflamed. It often comes and goes over time and may flare with certain triggers.

What Causes Eczema?

- A weakened skin barrier that allows moisture to escape
 - Dry skin
 - Immune system overactivity leading to inflammation
 - Genetics (family history of eczema, asthma, or allergies)
 - Triggers such as irritants, allergens, stress, or weather changes
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Common Symptoms

- Dry, rough, or scaly skin
 - Itching (sometimes severe, especially at night)
 - Red or inflamed patches
 - Thickened or cracked skin with repeated scratching
 - Commonly affects the hands, face, neck, and flexural areas (inside elbows, behind knees)
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Treatment Options

Topical Treatments

- Moisturizers (**use creams and ointments** – work better than lotions): restore the skin barrier and reduce dryness
- Topical corticosteroids: reduce inflammation during flares
- Topical calcineurin inhibitors (e.g., tacrolimus, pimecrolimus): steroid-sparing options for sensitive areas
- Other topical agents (e.g., crisaborole, ruxolitinib): reduce inflammation and itching

Oral/Systemic Medications

- Antihistamines (for itch, especially at night)
- Oral medications or biologics for moderate to severe eczema

Procedures

- Phototherapy (light therapy) for more persistent cases
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How to Manage at Home

- Moisturize at least twice daily, especially within a few minutes after bathing – locks in moisture
 - Use fragrance-free, gentle cleansers and skincare products
 - Take short, lukewarm showers (avoid hot water)
 - Apply medications as directed during flares
 - Avoid known triggers (soaps, detergents, fabrics, stress, allergens)
 - Keep nails short to reduce skin damage from scratching
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When to Follow Up

- If symptoms are not improving with treatment
- If itching is severe or affecting sleep
- If skin becomes painful, crusted, or shows signs of infection
- If frequent flares are occurring

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Disclaimer: This handout is for educational purposes only and does not replace medical advice.



Key Points to Remember

- Eczema is chronic but manageable
- Aggressive moisturization is key
- Treat flares early to prevent worsening
- Avoid triggers whenever possible