What is eczema?

Eczema is a condition that causes the skin to become itchy, dry, and cracked. Atopic eczema is the most common form of the condition. Babies often develop atopic eczema before their first birthday. In most cases, babies will have only small patches of dry skin, but in some cases, it can become widespread and skin can become inflamed across the body.[1]

On lighter skin, the condition may appear red, and on darker skin, the eczema can appear dark brown, purple, or grey.[1] Eczema can affect any part of the body, but it mostly affects the hands, insides of the elbows, backs of the knees, and the face and scalp in children.[1]

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Does my baby have eczema?



Eczema looks and acts differently in infants than it does in older children. The location and appearance of eczema changes as they grow, so it's important to know what to look for during every stage of your infant's life.

In their first 6 months:[2]

- Eczema usually appears **on the face, cheeks, chin, forehead, and scalp.**
- The condition **can spread to other areas of the body**, but not usually in the diaper area, where moisture protects the skin.
- The skin at this stage **tends to look redder.**

During their 6-12 months:[2]

- Eczema **often appears on your baby's elbows and knees** — places that are easy to scratch or rub as they're crawling.
- If the eczema rash becomes infected, it **may form a yellow crust, or small "pus bumps"** on the skin.

What causes eczema?

There isn't a specific cause for eczema. While eczema is genetic, it also has to do with a baby's overactive immune response to environmental factors.[3]

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Treatment for eczema
There is currently no cure for eczema but there are treatments available. Some tips for managing your baby's eczema include:

Make sure you have a good bathing technique that includes:[4]

- Using **lukewarm water** to bathe your baby
- Using **fragrance-free products**
- **Avoiding scrubbing** the baby's skin
- **Limiting bath time** to 5 to 10 minutes
- Moisturising your baby with **fragrance-free moisturiser**

Identify and eliminate triggers[4]

- Understand your baby's skin and what causes an eczema flare up, **such as soap, laundry detergent, pet hair, etc.**

Use moisturising products such as lotions, creams, or ointments[1]

- These **soften the skin and reduce the itchiness**

Reduce your baby's itching by:[5]

- Applying a **cool compress** to the skin
- Adding **colloidal oatmeal** to their bath

If you have any questions or concerns about your baby's skin, please talk with your doctor.

References:

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