

Cleansing and coping with eczema prone skin

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The skin is the largest organ of the human body and covers the body's entire external surface. Healthy skin has many functions including acting as a natural barrier, locking in moisture and protecting the body from environmental irritants, allergens and infections. However, for those with eczema, also known as atopic dermatitis, this barrier is compromised.

Eczema is a common, chronic skin condition characterised by inflammation, redness or change in the original skin colour, and itching. It can affect people of all ages but is most common in infants and children.

The condition is thought to result from a combination of genetic and environmental factors. Those with eczema have dry, itchy, reactive skin that is more sensitive to external triggers.

While there is no cure for eczema, symptoms can be managed effectively and many children will gradually improve during childhood.

Cleansing is one of the biggest daily challenges for those with eczema. Though essential for hygiene and comfort, it can also be a source of irritation. Plain water, some soaps and cleansers contain harsh surfactants, fragrances or preservatives that can worsen eczema symptoms. The resulting irritation can contribute to the familiar and frustrating itch scratch cycle.



How **baby** skin with eczema should be cleansed

- ◊ Newborns with eczema often have symptoms across the entire body often leading to misdiagnosis
- ◊ **Teething can flare eczema due to increased dribbling.** Gently cleanse the affected area with a soft cloth and water or a pre-moistened sensitive skin wipe such as WaterWipes® Newborn+ Baby
- ◊ **Change nappies/ diapers frequently** to reduce moisture and irritant exposure which can worsen both eczema and nappy rash
- ◊ **Apply a thin amount of barrier cream on to a clean dry nappy area** to manage nappy/diaper rash
- ◊ **Allow daily nappy/ diaper free time** to reduce irritation
- ◊ **Cleanse the skin with lukewarm, not hot, water**
- ◊ **Keep bath products minimal,** avoid soaps, bubble baths and scented products. Use fragrance free, soap free cleansers
- ◊ **Use pre-moistened wipes formulated for sensitive skin to gently remove irritants** on the skin such as WaterWipes® Newborn+ Baby.

A recent study highlights the value of using pre-moistened skin wipes for baby care in eczema prone skin*.

- ◊ **Limit bathing** to once a day or every other day
- ◊ **Gently pat the skin to dry** with a soft towel, do not rub
- ◊ **Apply a gentle moisturiser** suitable for infants and children with eczema after washing the skin
- ◊ **Avoid using olive oil** as it can dry and irritate the skin

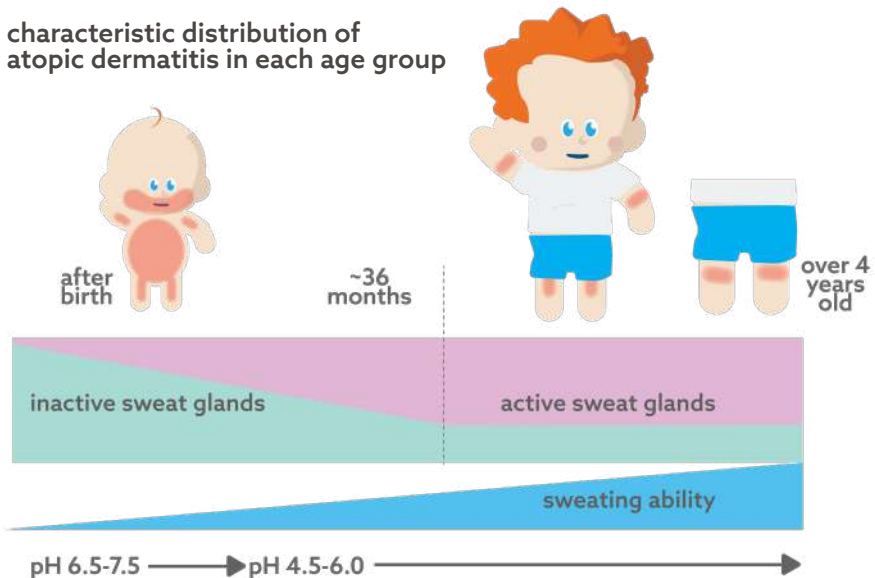


FIGURE 1. Common anatomical locations of atopic dermatitis in infancy and childhood, by age range.

How toddler skin with eczema should be cleansed

- ◊ Eczema in toddlers often appears on the limbs, groin and in the folds of the arms and legs
- ◊ **Apply a protective barrier cream around the mouth before meals** to reduce irritation from food
- ◊ **Follow the general cleansing advice** outlined in previous section
- ◊ **Limit bathing** to once a day and for no longer than 5 to 10 minutes
- ◊ **As toddlers explore new foods, spills can irritate eczema prone skin.** Gently wipe the face and hands immediately after eating using a minimal ingredient wipe such as WaterWipes® Baby & Toddler
- ◊ **Keep fingernails short** to prevent scratching
- ◊ Most children with eczema will improve with age, around 60% of children will grow out of it by their teenage years (*British Association of Dermatologists*)

characteristic distribution of atopic dermatitis in each age group



How **teen** skin with eczema should be cleansed

- ◊ **Limit showers or baths** daily, lasting no more than 10 minutes
- ◊ **Follow the general cleansing advice** outlined in previous sections
- ◊ **Avoid fragranced body washes, deodorants and other scented products** that may irritate the skin
- ◊ **Clean the skin promptly after sweating or sports** as sweat can trigger flare ups. Use a pre-moistened skin wipe specially formulated for sensitive skin to remove any irritants on the skin such as WaterWipes® Hydro Fresh which is a handy and ideal "on the go" clean**
- ◊ **Moisturise twice daily.** Consult a pharmacist or medical professional to determine which moisturiser is most suitable
- ◊ **Keep skincare simple,** using only a gentle cleanser and moisturis
- ◊ **If beginning to shave, use an unscented shaving cream or gel with a clean, fresh razor followed by a moisturiser**



How **adult** skin with eczema should be cleansed

- ◊ **Follow the general cleansing advice** outlined in previous section
- ◊ **Be mindful of occupational exposures** such as frequent handwashing, disinfectants, wet work, cleaning products and prolonged glove use
- ◊ **Choose appropriate protective gloves for your work environment** e.g. breathable, liquid repellent or liquid proof
- ◊ **Avoid prolonged use of non-breathable gloves**, give hands regular breaks
- ◊ **Always clean and dry hands thoroughly** after glove use
- ◊ **Moisturise hands at the end of the workday** to replenish natural oils
- ◊ **Ensure gloves are clean, dry and free of holes** before use
- ◊ **Try different mild cleansers** if frequent handwashing is required to find the right fit for you
- ◊ **Dry hands completely** after washing to reduce irritation and reapply a hand moisturiser
- ◊ **Regularly check for skin damage**
- ◊ **Moisturise** the skin often
- ◊ **Avoid wearing rings** to prevent trapped irritants that can worsen eczema

Coping with eczema

- ◊ **Do not hesitate to seek support.** Eczema can be emotionally and physically challenging for both adults and parents of children with eczema. Health care professionals understand this and are there to help
- ◊ Consult a health care professional for a **personalised treatment plan and any necessary medications**
- ◊ **Avoid scratching** to prevent worsening symptoms. Use gloves or mittens at night if needed
- ◊ **Keep a skin diary** to help identify triggers and patterns in flare ups
- ◊ **Speak to a health care provider** if eczema is:
 - Severe, persistent, raw, bleeding
 - Disrupting sleep or daily life
 - Not improving with over the counter treatment
 - Worsening or presenting new symptoms
- ◊ **Watch for signs of infection** including:
 - Yellow crust, pus or fluid filled spots
 - Redness, swelling, pain or warmth
 - Fever or feeling generally unwell
- ◊ **Monitor mental health** and speak to a health care professional if eczema is affecting emotional wellbeing

* Zoe Diana Draelos, MD E Gilligan, J Sommerville, : Diaper Wipe Safety in Children with Eczema and Eczema Prone Skin. AAD Florida March 2025

** 2 week in-home user study, 65 participants, Ayton Global Research, USA, April 2025