

Eczema

(you say, ex-ma)

Eczema is also known as dermatitis (you say, der-ma-ty-tis).

Eczema is not an infection. Your child cannot give eczema to another child. Your child cannot get eczema from another child.

Eczema is patches of dry itchy skin that become red. In children eczema is common behind the knees and on arms, hands, neck and face. Sometimes children stop getting eczema when they get older.



How do you get eczema?

The exact cause of eczema is unknown.

Eczema is not contagious.

What to do

- Keep the skin moisturised to help stop it itching and cracking.
- Moisturise if the skin is dry. This may be many times a day. Use an emollient (you say, e-mole-e-int) cream such as fatty cream or non-ionic cream. Your doctor can prescribe these creams. Use creams without perfume as perfumes can make the skin sting and itch. Make sure your hands are clean before applying eczema creams. Do not put your hands in tubs of creams as this can spread germs. Spoon out what you need and put this on a dish or paper towel.
- Keep the skin clean.
- Use soap-free cleaners (such as non-ionic cream) instead of soap.
- Keep your child's nails short and clean.
- If your child has eczema and swims in the sea or a pool, when they finish swimming wash off the salt water or chlorinated water, as the salt and chlorine can dry out their skin.

Do not do anything to dry out the skin as this will make the eczema worse.

Eczema can be controlled with treatment.

See your doctor if your child is waking at night or missing school because of their eczema.

Time off from kura or school

If your child feels well they can go to kura or school.

What to do if eczema gets infected

These are pictures of infected eczema.



Go to the doctor if any of these things happen:

- areas of skin start swelling and become more painful
- pus develops
- the infected eczema is bigger than a 10 cent coin
- small red spots appear around eczema

Your child may need special cream, such as steroid cream, blood tests and antibiotics, if their eczema gets infected.



It is important for your child to take the antibiotics every day until they are finished, even if the infected eczema seems to have cleared up. The antibiotics need to keep killing the infection in the body after the skin has healed.