

LIVING WITH ECZEMA GUIDE

It's true there's no cure for eczema, but there are many things you can do to control it. While the self-care may be different from person to person, there are some measures dermatologists recommend to reduce the itching of eczema and to soothe inflamed skin.

Try some of these tips and strategies and see what works for you:

- 1. Moisturize your skin.** Typically, eczema is dry and itchy so keeping your skin hydrated helps prevent it from cracking or becoming dry. Make a point of choosing a moisturizer that doesn't irritate your skin. **Dermarest® Eczema lotion and moisturizer** both offer a unique combination of conditioners to soften and soothe dry skin.
- 2. Use a humidifier.** Hot, dry indoor air can dry out your skin and worsen itching and flaking. A portable humidifier can add moisture to the air inside your home.
- 3. Learn your triggers.** Research shows that rapid changes of temperature, sweating and stress can worsen eczema. Certain allergens (substances that set off an allergic reaction) or irritants can be triggers as well.
- 4. Avoid contact with anything that irritates your skin.** Depending on your skin sensitivity this could be a few things or almost everything—such as detergents, cleaners, chemicals, soaps, perfumes, cosmetics, some fabrics, animals, foods, cigarette smoke, metals (i.e. jewelry), gasoline and turpentine. Look for products labeled 'hypoallergenic' which means that they do not contain potentially irritating ingredients.
- 5. Avoid certain plants.** Poison ivy is an obvious plant to avoid, but you might want to put plants with fuzzy leaves and stems on your "to avoid" list if you have eczema. Certain plants, such as daisies, tulips and poinsettias contain a variety of allergens that may cause a rash. If you're a gardener, be sure to wear gloves.
- 6. Reduce the itch.** Use an anti-itch cream or calamine lotion to relieve the itch. An antihistamine may be helpful if itching is severe and gets in the way of sleeping.
- 7. Keep track of flare-ups.** If you keep a record of your flare-ups, when they occurred, and what you were doing, it may reveal information that may be helpful to you and your doctor. For example, were you feeling really stressed out at the time? Were you out in cold weather?
- 8. Get a handle on stress.** Reducing stress can help prevent eczema outbreaks, but it's not always easy to do in today's fast-paced world. Also, worrying about an outbreak can cause stress on its own, leading to a vicious cycle. Find what works best for you: yoga, Pilates, meditation, a pet (if you're not allergic!), family and friends or a support group, maybe a hobby that you enjoy. Make it a point to take time out for yourself.
- 9. Avoid scratching!** You may have a strong urge to itch, but itching makes things worse. Cover the itchy area if you can't keep from scratching it. And keep your nails trim. You're less likely to do more damage if you scratch when your nails are short.



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