

## ECZEMA/DRY SKIN INSTRUCTIONS

Eczema is common and results from inadequate moisture in the outer layers of the skin. Exposure to soaps, chemicals, and even excessive bathing may remove the normal protective oil on the skin's surface and result in increased water loss. Water evaporates more rapidly with low humidity. During the winter months when we spend most of our time in dry heated air, eczema often occurs or worsens.

A tendency towards allergic eczema (atopic dermatitis) may run in families. There may be other factors including the immune system, which contribute to atopic dermatitis.

### ***TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:***

1. Daily bathing in lukewarm (not hot) water is fine. Use a mild fragrance-free soap or soap-free cleanser (Dove, Oil of Olay, Cetaphil, Cetaphil Restoraderm and Cerave) for areas where soap is needed, primarily in the armpits and groin. Use plain water for the rest of the skin, especially arms, legs and trunk. Do not use bubble baths or other fragranced products.
2. Prescription creams: Apply \_\_\_\_\_ ointment / cream to the rash areas immediately after bath (***within 5 minutes***) and one other time during the day. After several weeks the cream should be tapered off or switched to a milder product \_\_\_\_\_ to avoid thinning of the skin. Steroids work better if just used for a few weeks at a time, not continually. They may be used again later if the rash flares.
3. Moisturizers: Apply your moisturizer on top of the prescription cream twice a day and immediately after bathing (***within 5 minutes***). It should be applied to the entire body.
  - Ointments: (the most moisturizing and least irritating) Examples include Vaseline petroleum and SBR lipocream.
  - Creams: (good moisturizers and less messy) Examples of fragrance-free creams include Cetaphil, Cetaphil Restoraderm, Cerave, DML Forte, and Vanicreme.
  - Lotions: These are the least moisturizing but may be sufficient for mild eczema during the summer months. These should not be used in most cases-please ask your physician before using lotions.
4. Antihistamines: Oral medication that helps with itching. These are best taken at bed-time because they cause drowsiness. Do not take if driving or operating hazardous equipment.
5. Antibiotics: If your skin appears infected, an antibiotic may be prescribed.
6. Other helpful tips:
  - Avoid perfumes, cologne, fragranced sprays and powders, baby products.
  - Use an unscented laundry detergent (All Free, Cheer-free, Tide Free)
  - Use an unscented laundry softener (No bleach Bounce Free)
  - In the winter, a humidifier may be helpful. Maintaining well-watered plants also increases indoor humidity.