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**Eczema (atopic dermatitis)**

Eczema, or atopic dermatitis, is a chronic skin condition. It is the most common skin problem treated by pediatric dermatologists. Symptoms of eczema include: dry, red, itchy skin. Symptoms can come and go, and symptoms can also flare (become worse, exacerbate). The rash, or dry patches of skin, can appear anywhere on the body. Eczema is not contagious!

If you or a family member has a history of eczema, asthma, or allergic rhinitis (seasonal allergies), your infant has a higher chance of developing eczema. If acquired in infancy, many babies outgrow eczema by age four. Others may outgrow eczema by the time they are young adults.

There are certain types of medication, both prescription and over-the-counter (OTC), that may help keep eczema symptoms under control. Your doctor will recommend which types to try depending on the severity of your child’s symptoms. In addition to medication, there are preventative measures you can try at home.

**Preventative Measures**

* **Keep skin moisturized!**
  + Fragrance-free products
  + Cream or ointment (not lotion)
  + Apply after bath to damp skin
  + Moisturize at least once a day
* **Avoid scratching!**
  + May make rash worse
  + May lead to infection
  + Keep child’s fingernails short
  + The more your child scratches, the more itchy the area will be
* **Ask us about allergies!** 
  + Sometimes certain allergies (food, pets, pollen) may trigger eczema or make it worse
* **Avoid irritants!**
  + Wear soft fabrics (100% cotton)
  + Use fragrance-free body cleansers
  + Take short baths (or showers) with room temperature water
  + Use mild laundry detergent (no dyes or perfumes)
  + Avoid fabric softener in dryer (or use fragrance-free)
* **Ask about other triggers!**
  + Overheating
  + Sweating
  + Stress

\*\*Remember: eczema is a chronic condition – long-lasting or constantly recurring. It requires ongoing management by you, your child, and your doctor. Try not to get discouraged! We are here to help\*\*