

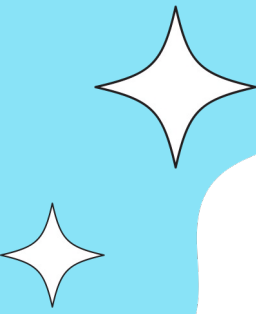
Multidisciplinary Atopic Dermatitis Program  
(MADP) Clinic

# **Eczema: An Overview**

# Definitions

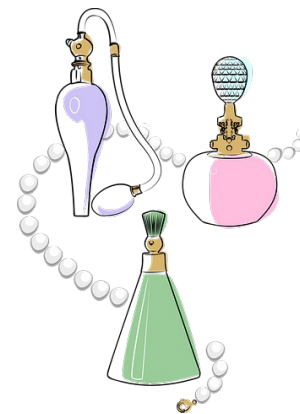
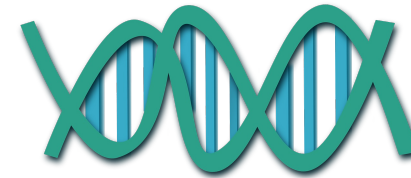
- Eczema/Atopic Dermatitis
  - A **red**, itchy, scaly/flaky rash
  - May sometimes ooze
  - Can affect both children and adults
- Severe Eczema
  - May involve more of the body
  - May be *itchier*, disturb *sleep*, or cause other life problems





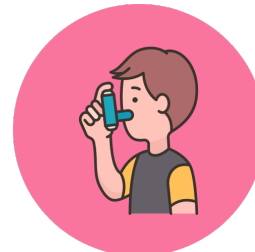
# Factors That Affect Eczema

- Multiple factors including both *genetic* and *environmental* components
  - This makes eczema complicated
- Having dry skin can make eczema worse
  - For eczema patients, certain oils are decreased or absent on the top layer of skin
- Other factors that worsen symptoms
  - Stress
  - Perfumes or scented products/soaps
  - Heat (in some individuals), weather changes
  - Environmental components



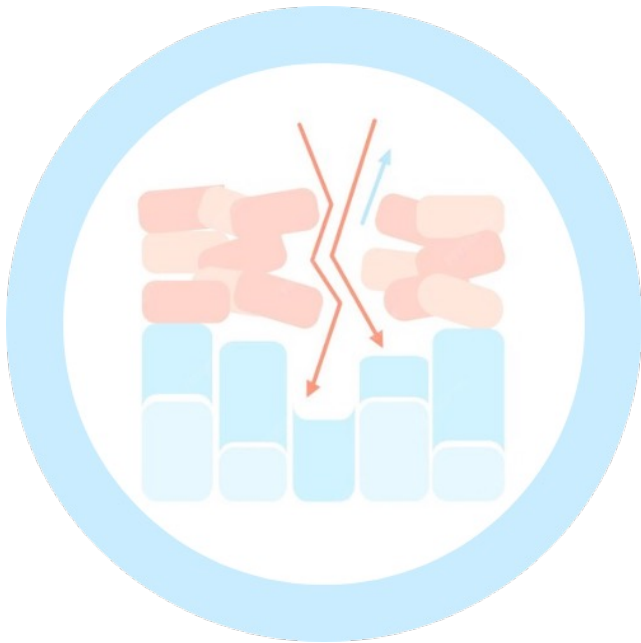
# Eczema and Allergies

- Allergies naturally introduced to body via *mouth* and *nose*
- Allergies and allergens may be introduced through skin; allergies and eczema may worsen
- **Atopic March**
  - The progression from eczema to more allergic conditions during infancy and childhood
  - If eczema or allergies aren't treated → sensitization
  - Early sign is eczema at young age
- Patients with eczema are more likely to have allergic conditions:
  - Food allergy
  - Hay fever
  - Asthma



# 3 Pillars of Eczema

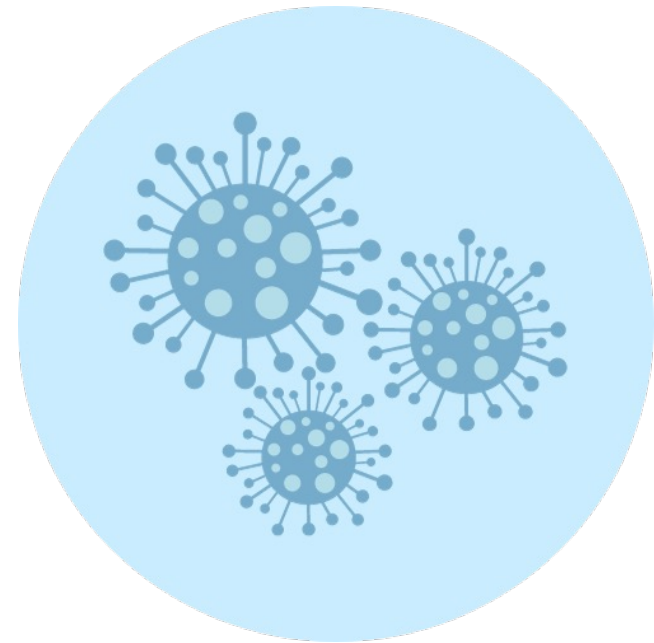
Skin Barrier Issues



Inflammation



Microbes



# Moisturizers

- Vary in thickness and effectiveness
  - Thicker moisturizers work better
  - *Ointments are a gold standard*
- Apply moisturizer after bathing and at least one other time per day
- Avoid fragranced products!



**Lotion**  
(water based)

**Cream**  
(oil based)

**Ointment**  
(oil based)

- Least hydration
- Easy to rub in

- In between; moderate

- Best hydration
- Slowest to absorb

← Thinnest

Thickest →

**\*\*Brand names above serve as examples. Many others available not listed.**

# Bathing

- Most experts recommend *daily* or *every other day*
  - Baths should last for **5 to 10 minutes**
  - Bathe with warm water
- Avoid bathing with harsh soaps
- Apply topical medications (if applicable) prior to moisturizer after bathing







# Anti-Inflammatory/Itch Medications and Other Therapies

What to use if moisturizers are not controlling the *itch* or *rashes* of eczema

# Topical Steroids

- Applied to the skin
  - *Not oral medication*
- Main treatment for inflamed skin
  - **Red**, bumpy, or scaling
- Range in strength
  - Mild to super-potent



# Topical Steroid Safety



- Skin thinning is **very rare**
  - Only occurs with long-term or continuous use on **clear** or **sensitive** skin areas
    - Face and body folds (armpits, groin, inner arm, inner knees, etc)
- Effects on **growth** are even rarer
  - *Remember:* Topical steroids are applied to the skin, not taken as a pill
    - This means they rarely have effects on the body system as a whole
- However, poorly controlled, severe eczema **has** been associated with poor growth

# How to Use Topical Steroids

- **Use once or twice daily**
- **Coat** the inflamed skin generously
- Your medical provider will give you a sense of how much medicine to use each time
- Non-continuous, appropriate use of topical steroid can be done safely and not lead to withdrawal



# Other Medications

- Some topical medications for eczema are **not steroid-based**
- Especially useful for:
  - Sensitive skin areas (face and skin folds (groin, armpits, knee and arm fold))
  - Maintenance regimens where long-term use is recommended
    - Helps to **“keep away”** eczema
- **Examples**
  - Calcineurin inhibitors
    - Ie. Tacrolimus, pimecrolimus
  - PDE4 inhibitors
    - Ie. Crisaborole
  - JAK Inhibitor
    - Ie. Ruxolitinib



# Systemic Therapy

- Systemic medicines are taken as pills or injections
- Reserved for patients with moderate-to-severe eczema that is not improving with topical medication
  - Incredibly helpful in allowing for fewer flares and better disease control
- Risks and benefits of systematic medicines can be discussed with your health care providers
  - Educational details will be included in our Systemic Therapy module



# Antihistamines



- Can be used to help with sleep, but likely do not directly block the cause of itching in eczema
- The best way to relieve and prevent itch is to control inflammation with eczema medications
- However, certain antihistamines can be helpful for some allergic conditions



# Antibiotics

- Antibiotics can be used to treat bacterial infections
  - Eczema patients are more prone to bacterial skin infections, specifically staph
    - This is due to their tendency to have higher colonization on skin
- Staph infections are caused by a bacteria called *Staphylococcus aureus* (Staph)
  - This results in crusting and pus bumps around the infected area





# Antivirals

- Antivirals can be used to treat viral infections
  - Ie. acyclovir, valacyclovir
- Eczema herpeticum is caused by herpes simplex virus
  - This results in clusters of blisters that are itchy and painful
    - Patient may have chills , fever, and/or fatigue



# Non-Medication Therapies

- Bleach baths



- Wet wraps



- Use of loose cotton, non-irritating clothing



# Wet Wrap Therapy



- Soak/wet skin
- Apply topical medication to affected skin



- Grab dry gauze, wrap a second layer on top



- Dampen gauze in warm water
- Wrap wet gauze around affected area



- Cover gauze layers with surgical netting/socks/"Coban"
- Leave overnight or several hours



# Summary

- Excellent skin care with bathing, moisturizing, and appropriate use of anti-inflammatory medications will help control eczema
- Treatments can be used safely and effectively
- Each topic will be reviewed in greater detail in other modules
- We want to work with you to get your eczema under control 😊
- For more information:
  - <http://www.nationaleczema.org/>
  - For detailed information on various topics, updated every Wednesday, please visit the NEA Wednesday Webinar Series
    - <https://nationaleczema.org/webinar-wednesdays/>

Please reach out to us if you have any questions 😊



**Thank you for reading 😊**

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