

# UAB Health Education

## STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

### ECZEMA



EcZema, also called atopic dermatitis, is a skin condition characterized by irritation, redness and itchiness. It is most common in babies and children but can occur at any age. It is a chronic condition and tends to flare periodically. It is caused by an allergic reaction and is often associated with asthma and seasonal allergies.

#### SYMPTOMS

- Dry, itchy skin
- Red patches, especially in the elbow creases, behind knees, face, hands, wrists, buttocks
- Small, raised bumps that may leak clear fluid and crust over when scratched

#### DIAGNOSIS

Based on your symptom history and by examining your skin. Your provider may also use other testing to determine conditions that might accompany your eczema.

#### TREATMENT

EcZema can be persistent. If regular moisturizing is not effective at controlling your symptoms, you may try one of the following:

- **1% hydrocortisone cream** is an over-the-counter corticosteroid that can help prevent or control itching.
- **Antihistamines:** diphenhydramine (Benadryl), loratadine (Claritin), fexofenadine (Allegra), cetirizine (Zyrtec). These can lessen itching in severe eczema and are also available over-the-counter.
- **Stronger steroid creams** can also be prescribed by your provider if your symptoms are not improved with over-the-counter options.

#### RESOURCES

**FamilyDoctor.org** <https://familydoctor.org/condition/eczema-and-atopic-dermatitis/>

**Mayo Clinic** <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/atopic-dermatitis-eczema/symptoms-causes/syc-20353273>

#### RISK FACTORS

- Family or personal history of eczema, asthma or seasonal allergies

#### PREVENTION

- Bathe with mild soap such as Dove, Basis, or Olay. Carefully pat skin dry with a soft towel.
- Moisturize your skin frequently using ointments, creams, and lotions. Moisturizers that are greasy such as petroleum jelly (Vaseline) are preferred.
- Limit contact with possible irritants such as household cleansers, detergents, aftershave lotions, gasoline, turpentine and other solvents.
- Use a humidifier in your room if the air is dry.

