



## Eczema Patient Information Sheet

### What is Eczema?

Eczema is a chronic skin condition which involves the inflammation of the skin, causing it to become dry, red or itchy.

The most common type of eczema is atopic eczema (atopic dermatitis) which affects up to 20% of children in the UK and up to 10% of adults. Other types include contact dermatitis which can be triggered by irritants and allergens in the environment.

### Dealing with Flares

Usually you will notice a worsening of symptoms when there is a flare; the skin may be itchier, redder or persistently dry even with regular emollient. If so, it may be useful to consider how severe the flare is.

- Mild flare - dry skin and infrequent itching +/- areas of redness
- Moderate flare - areas of dry skin, frequent itching and redness
- Severe flare - widespread areas of dry skin, severe itching and redness, change in skin pigmentation

### Is there a severe itch that may be disturbing your sleep?

You may want to consider using a non-sedating antihistamine, these are available over the counter in the pharmacy, speak to your pharmacist or GP about this

### Is the skin crusty or oozing?

There may be an infection on the skin, contact your GP for an appointment to discuss this further

### Other helpful links:

National Eczema Association: [National Eczema Association | Symptoms, Support, Treatment & Research](#)

British Skin Foundation: [Eczema – British Skin Foundation](#)  
British Association of Dermatologists Patient Information Leaflets: [British Association of Dermatologists - Patient Information Leaflets \(PILs\) \(bad.org.uk\)](#)

### Your Day to Day Eczema Management

#### Keep the skin hydrated with a regular emollient.

Apply as many times as you need it, at least every day. Emollients can range from thicker, greasy ointments or thinner creams, you may need to discuss with your GP or pharmacist to pick the right one for you.

**If you notice your skin looks or feels dry**, this may be a sign that you need to apply emollients more frequently

**If you notice your eczema is triggered by something**, take note of this and try to avoid this trigger in the future. There are lots of different things that have been known to trigger eczema, from environmental allergens like dust mites, to changes in season and certain chemicals. You may need to speak to your GP about this.

**Remember**, what works for one person's eczema may be different for another – take time to understand what works best for you to manage it most effectively!

### Handwashing with Eczema:

1. Use a gentle soap – avoid those with harsh fragrances and warm water. If your skin is very sensitive you may want to consider soap substitute.
2. Pat your hands with a clean towel, or disposable hand towel gently to avoid irritating the skin
3. Always use a moisturiser after washing your hands as frequently as possible



If your workplace requires frequent handwashing, aim to use your regular moisturiser as frequently as possible, using a greasier emollient at the end of the day.

You could also opt for a soap substitute instead of regular soap and consider when you can use alcohol hand gel instead of full handwashing.