

# Eczema

## Description

Eczema is an inflammation of the skin which can cause itching, dryness and flakiness. It may just be a small patch of skin being affected, but can affect skin anywhere on the body. Often the problem is worst in the folds of the skin where the limbs bend.

Eczema is often a family condition and can be linked with a history of allergies and/or asthma. Eczema flare ups are often caused by other factors:

- Infants often develop a patch of eczema below their chins, which gets wet from dribbling.
- Chemicals and detergents may cause skin irritation.
- Contact with substances which the body has become allergic to.

## Exclusion period

A child with eczema does not need to be excluded from your centre.

However, the dryness, cracking, itching and scratching that happens with eczema increases the chance of skin bacterial infections (school sores, cellulitis) developing. A child with untreated school sores needs to be excluded from your centre, please refer to the school sore factsheet for exclusion periods.

## Responsibilities of staff

- Develop an individual care plan with the parents. This should outline how to manage the symptoms of eczema.
- For children with severe eczema there may be a need for information to be given to other parents.
- Monitor how other children interact with the child with eczema. At times the child with eczema can be left out due to their appearance. Speaking with children may be needed.
- Make sure the child doesn't overheat. Monitor their sleeping and remove layers of clothing if needed. Good air flow in the sleep room is required especially in warmer months.
- Ask parents to cover any broken skin or sores with a clean dressing.
- Ask parents to provide sunscreen which suits the child's skin.
- Keep the child out of the sun at the hottest times of the day.
- Sand can irritate eczema. The child may need a shower or to wash down their skin after playing in the sandpit.

## Responsibilities of parents

- Develop an individual care plan with staff outlining things they can do to manage symptoms.
- Provide emollient cream with a spatula/spoon for treatment and sunscreen for protection.
- Cover broken skin or sores with a clean dressing or gauze.
- Provide a letter to put on the board outlining your child's condition and what others can do to support your child.

# Eczema

## Treatment

- Always wash and dry your hands thoroughly before and after applying the emollient cream.
- Apply emollient cream according to the instructions on the container.
- When applying the emollient cream, scoop out enough cream with a spatula/spoon in one go to cover the affected area of skin. This prevents bacteria from the skin getting into the tub of emollient cream.
- Use an action plan to help guide the treatment. A template can be found [here](#).