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Eczema care

- Avoid scented materials; shampoos, soap, detergents, softeners.... and use instead unscented hypoallergenic products.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to water while bathing, preferably 5 minutes.
- Cut the nails properly to decrease the chance for skin cuts and secondary infection.
- Generous use of moisturizers all the time and not to wait for eczema to flare.
- Use cotton underwear, avoid wool clothes.
- Using appropriate potency topical steroids - i.e. the lowest strength is NOT always the most appropriate. Most commonly used topical steroids should NOT thin the skin when applied to treat usual cases of eczema.
- Use the eczema cream/ointment as prescribed, usually it is twice a day up to 14 consecutive days unless instructed otherwise, and use it in sufficient quantities.
- The topical steroid should be applied in a thin layer to all affected parts and then massage gently into the skin rather than leaving it on the surface to be rubbed off on the clothing.
- The right amount of steroid cream can be measured using the finger-tip unit, finger-tip amount of cream is used to cover an area of rash the size of your palm.
- Do NOT be concerned if excess is accidentally applied - this can be gently taken off or if left on, will rub off onto the clothing.
- The steroids can be applied to excoriated or fissured areas as these areas are the ones which are most in need for treatment.
- Treat the eczema rash until it is totally gone rather than stopping or reducing treatment when it is almost better. Stopping when it is almost better leaves residual eczema to flare up promptly. It is important to clear up the eczema totally before stopping and this will induce a longer lasting remission.

- Immediately treating minor areas of eczema flare-ups to clear them quickly rather than waiting "till it gets bad" to treat. Once eczema flares significantly, the scratch-itch cycle will promote persistence and make it more difficult to get under control.
- "Waiting and seeing" tends to result in longer and more persistent applications of topical steroid for control.

You can find this hand out among other allergy info on my website: www.doctorahmed.ca