

Fact sheet No. 2



Easy Read

Eczema



This fact sheet helps you to know what's 'normal' and what you can expect to happen if you get Eczema.

It also tells you when you should become concerned and see your doctor.

What is eczema?

With eczema, your skin can appear red, swollen, crusty and cracking.



You will feel itchy often caused by skin dryness, infection or scratching.

How common is eczema?

Eczema is common.



It affects about 2 out of 10 children and 10 out of every 100 adults in the UK.

What's causing it?

Eczema tends to start in childhood.



You are more likely to get it if someone in your family has it.



It may be caused because you are allergic to something.



People with eczema often have other allergic problems as well, like asthma or hay fever.



In children it may be caused by the child being allergic to a type of food.

What may happen?



How bad can eczema get?

Mostly it is mild.

But for some people it can be severe.



Will I get cured?

Many children with eczema 'grow out' of it by the time they become a teenager.



But in some people, eczema may last their whole life.



There is no known cure.

But there are many treatments that can reduce the problem.

What can I do to get better?

Avoid the things that make it worse

Any of these things may make it worse:



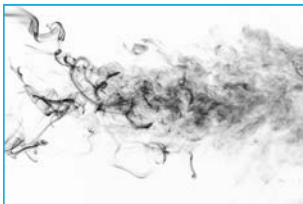
- Pollen. Pollen is given off by flowers mostly in the spring



- Some cleaning products



- Some foods
- Pets and animals



- Smoke



- Stress



- Some weather

Try to find out whether any of these affect your eczema.



Avoid soap

Avoid soap and bubble bath. These can dry out the skin.



Use **emollients** instead - you can get these from your pharmacist. There are many types.



An **emollient** is a cream that softens the skin



Avoid scratching too hard

Scratching feels like a natural thing to do, but scratching too hard can make the itch even worse.



Don't scratch your skin too hard with your fingernails.

Instead, rub itchy patches gently with your fingertips.



Avoid hot and cold temperatures

Hot and cold temperatures may make your eczema worse.



The right clothing

Wool and some other material used to make clothes can make eczema worse.



You may prefer wearing clothes made out of cotton.



Moisturisers

Use moisturising creams or ointments regularly.

Put lots on even when your skin is clear.



Detergents

Don't use fabric conditioners.

Do an extra rinse when using a washing machine.



Treatments

Speak to your pharmacist about treatments.

Antihistamines are medications that can help with itching.

When should I get medical help?

Contact your local doctor's (GP) surgery when you feel you need help.

Get medical advice if you notice any of these:



Reduced quality of life

Your skin problems stop you from sleeping or doing things like swimming.



Infection

Your skin starts cracking, giving off some liquid or becomes painful.



Blistery rash

You get a painful blistery rash.



Spread

It spreads to other areas of your body.

Where can I find out more?



NHS Choices

Web: [www.nhs.uk/Conditions/eczema-\(atopic\)/Pages/Introduction.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/eczema-(atopic)/Pages/Introduction.aspx)

Remember that your pharmacist can also help you.