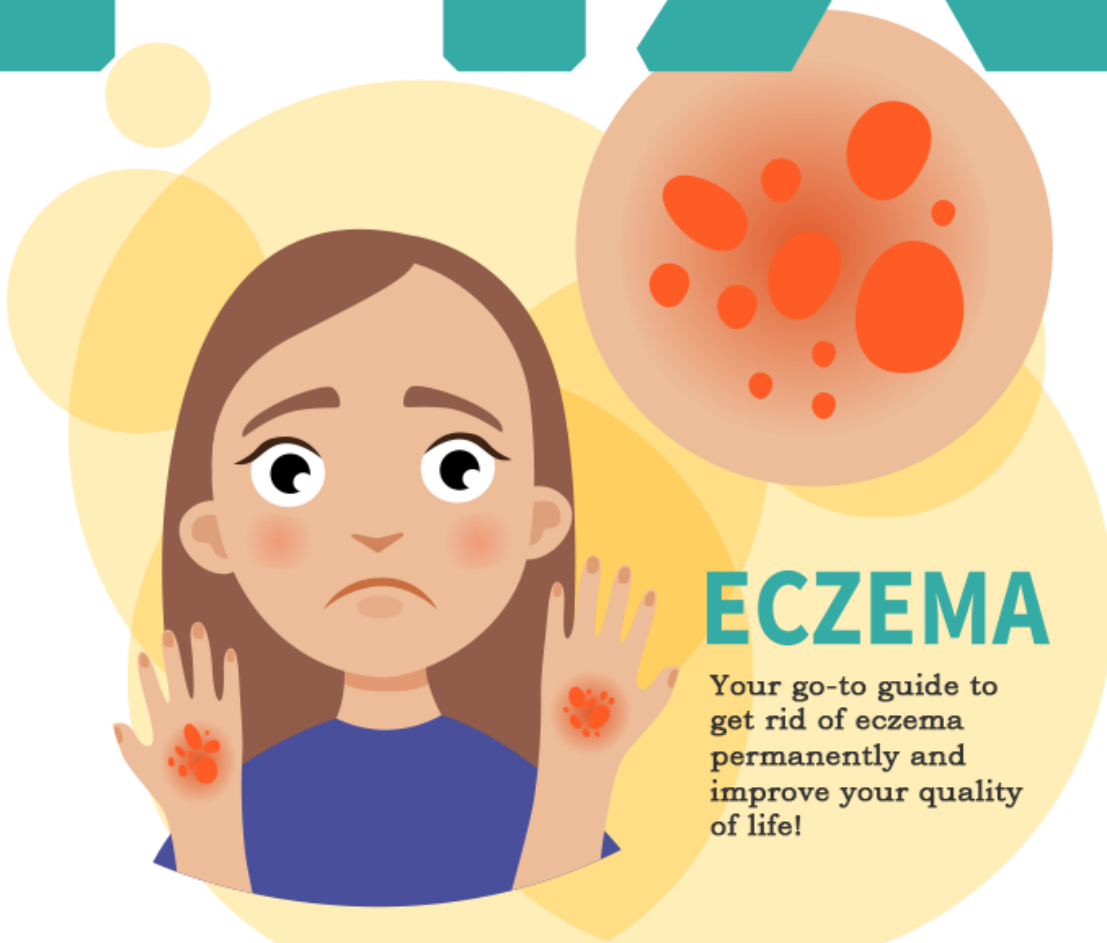


# ECZEMA FIX



## ECZEMA

Your go-to guide to  
get rid of eczema  
permanently and  
improve your quality  
of life!

**A NATURAL AND SAFE APPROACH  
TO ECZEMA TREATMENT**

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# Introduction

Eczema, that horrible itchy rash on your skin, isn't new. Ancient Egyptians suffered from eczema and sought relief with oatmeal baths. And it worked! Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, discussed the role of skin disease, sweating, and itching over two thousand years ago.

Thirty million Americans suffer from eczema, including children. Doctors have discovered a genetic link for eczema between parent and child. If a parent suffers from eczema, the child may be predisposed to eczema, as well.

One in five school-age children have this rash, and one in twelve adults suffer from eczema. This condition can affect their self-image, self-esteem, and health. It can affect every-day life and cause a lack of sleep. It can also be embarrassing.

This book will discuss exactly what eczema is and how it can be treated to reduce the symptoms. It's not a disease, and there is no cure. But the symptoms of itch and inflammation *can* be contained.

Eczema can't be "caught" from someone else. It's an immune disorder that can flare up because of environmental and emotional causes. And those are matters we CAN control. We will discuss the lifestyle changes necessary to alleviate the worst of the eczema symptoms or get rid of the rash altogether.

Although the eczema rash has been around for thousands of years, we still know far too little about it. Research is just beginning. It has shown that changes in lifestyle habits can have a tremendously beneficial effect of eczema.

*Eczema Fix: How to Get Rid of Eczema Naturally & Permanently* places the control of this disorder in *your* hands. There may not be a cure for eczema, but you no longer need to suffer from its debilitating effects.

Eczema is an auto-immune disease where the body refuses to function as it should. Be aware that the same auto-immune misfunctions can simultaneously bring about other auto-immune problems, such as Crohn's disease and allergies. By easing the

symptoms of eczema, you may well be helping your body cope with other auto-immune challenges.

The standard medical cure for eczema is a hydrocortisone steroid cream. This works well at alleviating the symptoms, but it does nothing to address the underlying causes of eczema. That is what this book does to help you become eczema-free for life.

Certain changes in your daily life can do much to rid yourself of eczema. Most rashes have very specific triggers which this book will discuss. Once you identify the triggers and alleviate them from your environment, you are taking the necessary steps to rid yourself of the symptoms of eczema.



# CHAPTER 1

## WHAT IS ECZEMA?



# Chapter 1: What is Eczema?

Eczema is difficult to diagnose. Any dermatologist will look for a combination of symptoms. Eczema always involves a rash, which can appear on any part of the body. The rash is red and is usually covered with white, scaly skin. The scales are due to inflammation caused by constant scratching.

It's the constant scratching that causes the skin to shed skin cells, which results in the white scales that cover the red rash. Ultimately, scratching can change the actual color of your skin.

A rash is just the first clue for a dermatologist. There are, after all, many types of rashes. With eczema, there are other specific symptoms to watch for.

Lack of moisture can cause the skin to crack. These cracks just make the itch worse, which causes you to scratch more. Eczema can be a vicious cycle. Most of the time, eczema rashes also have

blisters. If these blisters grow large enough, they can become infectious.

Another sign of eczema is dry, brittle nails or nails with fungus. The redness that shows up on the skin can also frequently be seen when the eyes are reddish and when the tongue has red patches. An eczema flareup can make the eyes look swollen. Some of this is caused by rubbing the itchy, infected eyes.

A good dermatologist will look beyond the red, scaly skin. When eczema becomes chronic, the resulting symptoms can be quite serious.

Lymph nodes filter the body against foreign invaders, such as germs. Swollen lymph nodes can mean they are busy fighting eczema flareups. This is something your dermatologist will check.

When the body is fighting the symptoms of eczema, it is using precious nutritional resources. That means that adults with eczema are frequently malnourished, and children with eczema are often small for their age. When treated, the body immediately begins to process nutrients more efficiently. The effect on children, who almost immediately show signs of growth, is remarkable.

Adults and children with eczema frequently develop asthma and hay fever, as well. Eczema is often associated with allergies, so maintaining an allergy-free environment becomes a critical tool in fighting eczema the natural way.

In addition to chronic eczema, there are different types of eczema. When properly diagnosed, most of these are treatable.

## **Dermatitis Eczema**

It is caused by soaps and other cleaning products. These can leave the skin dry and deprived of necessary oils, resulting in red, itchy skin. Since this most frequently affects the hands, it can cause a lot of embarrassment. Fortunately, once the culprits have been identified and eliminated, the rash will abate, and the skin will turn back to normal.

## **Allergic Dermatitis Eczema**

Some people develop rashes due to allergies to substances like nickel in jewelry. A dermatologist can do patch tests to determine the allergy. Once the substance in question is removed, the rash should disappear.

## **Seborrheic Eczema**

This type of eczema usually develops in young people. It is the result of developing hormones causing flaky dandruff to appear on the scalp and surrounding areas. An anti-tar shampoo can be very beneficial in helping with this type of eczema.

Healing your eczema symptoms requires proper diagnosis. You need to see a dermatologist. But not all dermatologists specialize in eczema. It's important that you consult with a specialist who is knowledgeable about eczema, its signs, and what can be done to alleviate the uncomfortable itch that is always a part of any eczema.

## **Atopic Eczema**

This type of eczema is common in children. If at least one parent suffers from eczema, the child might get it, as well. Atopic eczema can be anywhere from mild to severe. Children with atopic eczema are at a greater risk for asthma and food allergies, so testing should be done for those symptoms, as well. Many children do outgrow this type of eczema, but not all.

Signs of atopic dermatitis in children are the usual patches of dry skin that turn red and inflamed. The most likely places for these patches to appear in on the face and neck, as well as the elbows and knees.

Scratching always makes eczema worse. Since children can't understand that they should not scratch, it is important to seek treatment as soon as possible.

People with atopic dermatitis usually experience flareups, a period when the eczema gets worse for a time. Flareups can occur due to irritants such as soaps, dust mites, dog and cat fur, and certain fabrics. Stress and other emotions can also trigger eczema flareups.

## Varicose Eczema

Varicose eczema occurs in older adults who have varicose veins. Standing can become more difficult as people age, which can bring on both varicose veins and varicose eczema, which can result in dry, itchy patches around the ankle area.

Skin, in general, becomes less moist and drier as people age. As with any other form of eczema, it's important not to exacerbate the problem by scratching. This type of eczema can worsen in cold weather, so keeping your skin moist during the winter is an important part of reducing the constant itching.

Your treatment should include lifestyle changes, elimination of stress, and a diet that removes potential allergens from your diet. All these treatments will be discussed in this book. Ask your doctor how these treatments can best be applied to *your* eczema, then follow his advice. With proper diagnosis and treatment, you will be itch-free and living the life you are now only dreaming about.

There is no reason for you to suffer from eczema. The sooner you act, the sooner your skin will be back to normal.



# CHAPTER 2

## THE ECZEMA ITCH





## Chapter 2: The Eczema Itch

### How Itching Works

As anyone suffering from eczema knows, the constant and unabated itching is the most difficult to endure. While the dry patches may appear unsightly, the itching can become unbearable. To conquer the itch, it's important to know what happens to the skin during an eczema flareup.

It's a fact that *everyone* with eczema suffers from incessant itching. There is no eczema without itching. In extreme cases, the agony can persist all day and all night, with little or no relief. Of course, scratching always leads to more itching.

The itch begins when nerve fibers located in the top epidermis are triggered. The triggers can be dry skin, allergies, or emotional stress.

When triggered by drying skin, the nerves become alarmed and send an “itch” message to the brain. The brain is always ready and

eager to respond to a cry for help. When it receives the “itch” message, it immediately sends an order to “scratch.” This is done on a subconscious level. Since you never consciously told yourself to scratch, telling yourself to stop scratching doesn’t work.

The epidermis, or the skin’s top layer, is constantly changing. New skin cells are always being produced. Normal skin is protected by barriers in the epidermis that shields the skin from the itch stimuli that makes it feel dry. Or, put another way, these barriers help the skin retain natural moisture. Skin suffering from eczema lacks that protection.

The skin is unable to hold moisture and becomes drier faster. This causes skin cells to shrink and let irritants into the body. This can happen anytime, but it seems to occur most frequently at night when the body is at rest. This accounts for why much of the itching becomes intensified at night.

Every fiber of your being just wants to scratch. Our brain is always at work. It can waken us from a deep sleep with its order to scratch. The scratching feels extremely good and brings some needed relief. As a result, the brain thinks it has done its job in looking out for our general welfare. It “rewards” our scratching by temporarily lessening the itch. As most everyone knows, when behavior is

rewarded, it becomes intensified and continues. In other words, the brain will simply continue to send “scratch” messages whenever we feel itchy.

A large part of the problem is the brain’s eagerness to protect and help us when we feel distressed. When it senses that something is wrong with the skin, it expands the red blood cells to allow immune cells to enter the fray and protect the skin from invaders. It’s these enlarged red blood cells that cause the redness and inflammation of eczema.

It is the job of our immune cells is to protect us from invaders. In “normal” bodies, that works out very well. When we suffer from eczema, however, the immune cells are unable to distinguish between “good” and “bad” cells. This means the attack is directed indiscriminately at all cells.

Good cells become damaged in the process, which weakens our immune system. When the skin is being attacked, the itching spirals out of control and its defense mechanisms are being destroyed from within. The “itch/scratch” cycle becomes automatized. It’s a learned behavior to familiar stimuli. Even infants suffering from eczema will respond automatically by scratching. Telling anyone with eczema to “just stop scratching” is

useless. The brain, with all its complexities, is transmitting different orders.

## **Using the Mind to Help the Mind**

We've have seen how the brain, to be helpful, will exacerbate the itch/scratch cycle. Scratching becomes a subconscious defense that we do without being totally aware. We simply respond automatically by scratching. The good news is that the brain will *always* be eager to help us. We just need to send it the correct messages.

Studies have shown that stress is not only one of the major triggers for eczema, but the same stress prevents eczema medication from working, creating a double-whammy situation.

This requires eczema suffers to become aware of emotional triggers. Does it get worse at work? At home with one's spouse? When bills start coming at the beginning of the month? Emotional triggers usually have a very specific cause.

Unless you pinpoint the triggers, stress will only worsen and create a new cycle of anxiety and depression. Anxiety will lead to even greater anxiety. A recent survey has found that more than 30 percent of people suffering from anxiety and depression also suffer from eczema.

It's good to know that your emotions *can* be controlled, thereby putting you in charge of your eczema healing process.

When we experience stress, we enter a fight or flight state of mind. This causes the body to create stress hormones. But these hormones can attack the immune system and cause the skin to become inflamed.

Stress cannot be eliminated from our lives, and the lack of stress wouldn't totally get rid of eczema. But identifying and eliminating stress will go a long way in making eczema less painful. There is no cure for eczema. You can, however, rid yourself of most of the symptoms.

## **Becoming Proactive**

Being proactive begins when you pay attention to your emotions.

Ask yourself:

- Have you been feeling sad or anxious for no discernible reason?
- Does your life seem hopeless?
- Do you have less energy than you used to?
- Have you lost interest in activities you used to enjoy?

If you've ever blushed, you know how strong the mind/skin connection is. The following chapter will take a close look at how we can control the symptoms of eczema with a few changes in our lifestyle.

# CHAPTER 3

## ECZEMA AND YOUR EMOTIONS



## **Chapter 3: Eczema and Your Emotions**

We wouldn't be human if we didn't have emotions, both positive and negative. When we suffer from eczema, however, our unresolved emotional life can cause havoc.

Taking care of the self becomes critical to our skin health. Every person is different, and every self-help method may not work for every person, but it is worth the time to experiment and determine what methods work best at elevating your positive feeling and eliminating the negative, triggering emotions.



## **Exercise**

Exercise is one of the best ways to relieve stress. You don't need to join a gym, although that is one way of getting some exercise. You can simply walk, swim, play tennis, or engage in any other physical activity. Try climbing the stairs instead of taking the elevator. Two hours of exercise a week is highly recommended. More than that is even better.

Exercise provides an added boost to the immune system, which is important for eczema control. The only problem with exercising when you have eczema is that sweating can deprive the body of much-needed moisture. This can be very drying for the skin and can start an itch cycle.

That does not mean you should be avoiding exercise. Simply do low-impact exercises that won't have you sweating. Be sure to apply plenty of body lotion after your shower. Speaking of showers, lukewarm showers dry out the skin far less than hot showers.

If you jog, do so during the early morning or evening hours, when the sun is less intense, and you will sweat less.

Wear loose clothing while exercising. Spandex may look sexy if you have the curves, but it can irritate your skin. Loose cotton clothes are the best next to the skin.

## **Diet**

The connection between eczema and diet is still ongoing and will be discussed at greater length in another chapter. But it helps to remember that eczema can be triggered by allergies. Glutens, nuts, and dairy are the worst culprits. Many people have found that processed foods can worsen eczema system.

To ensure that you are allergy-free, have your doctor perform the standard patch tests.

## **Daydream**

There is great value in daydreaming. First, when you daydream, you are focused on your inner fantasy. The more your mind is focused, the less negative, anxiety-producing thoughts will enter.

In addition, this is the state of mind that allows solutions to problems to flow naturally, thus providing you with answers to problems that have been causing anxiety.

## **Psychotherapy**

Therapy, especially cognitive behavioral therapy, has proven extremely successful in treating anxiety and depression. While you should be consulting with a dermatologist, consider also seeing a psychotherapist.

Therapy can be a very effective way of discovering the emotional triggers that cause eczema to flare up. Sometimes getting at the root

of these triggers can be difficult, and a trained therapist can help you with some insight.

## **Repressed Anger**

We've already made the connection between skin and emotions such as anxiety and depression. However, sometimes, emotions are repressed. There are thoughts we don't want to face, such as anger, so it's easier to pretend these thoughts don't exist. Unfortunately, these emotions don't simply disappear because we refuse to acknowledge them. For many who suffer from repressed anger, the emotions go straight to the skin.

In a hospital study involving 128 patients, it was found that the 27 patients who had eczema experienced worsening of symptoms whenever they were faced with frustration.

As an eczema sufferer, ask yourself:

1. Do you frequently feel numb, shut off from your feelings?
2. Do you frequently pretend to be happy when you're feeling down?

3. Do you rarely or never share your feelings with another person?
4. Do you become easily irritated at the smallest things?
5. Do you passively agree with people rather than expressing your own opinion?
6. Do you keep busy every moment of the day? Make-work busyness can keep feelings repressed.

If you answered yes to any (or more) of the above questions, chances are excellent you are suffering from repressed anger. The good news is, you can do something about it and release the emotional triggers. You'll see the results on your skin.

Repressed anger is like excess baggage you're carrying around while strutting uphill. It's a heavy load to carry. At some point, your body will make its displeasure known. And one of the ways it lets you know something is wrong is by attacking the skin with eczema.

We have mentioned the importance of pinpointing your emotional triggers. When we are in denial, psychotherapy can be extremely helpful with this. But one clue may be that you insist you never get angry. The fact is, we *all* get angry at times. This is normal. Chances are, if you never get angry, your anger is being repressed and fueling your skin with toxins.

Forget for a moment what repressed anger does to your relationships. Before it affects another person, it can ruin your health in general and your skin in particular.

Anger can be the result of childhood abuse from 30 years ago or a current work situation involving a nasty boss. The anger may be perfectly normal and justified, but we are frequently taught at an early age that anger is “inappropriate.” All too often, parents will tell a child, “How dare you get angry with grandma?” So, anger gets repressed until it becomes a habit. And our skin may well be paying the price.

## **Processing Repressed Anger**

Begin by being totally honest with yourself. This can be harder than it seems. Allow yourself to be open to any thoughts that may come into your head. We all have emotional needs, especially as children. When these needs aren't met, we become angry, but as children, we don't feel strong enough to express those emotions. So, they become buried.

You are no longer a helpless child, so it's okay to express any feeling as it arises. Then, once you have gotten in touch with some or all the repressed anger, you need to release it.

It isn't necessary, or sometimes advisable, to confront the source of your anger directly. You don't want to get fired from a job before you have another one lined up. If your repressed anger goes back to childhood, the culprit may be dead at this point.

But acknowledging the anger is crucial. You cannot change that which remains unacknowledged. Then, work toward forgiveness. This means accepting and moving on with your life. Your life matters; the other person has been made inconsequential. Removing repressed anger from your life is a gift you give yourself. And your skin will surely reap the benefits.

# CHAPTER 4

## ECZEMA AND MEDITATION





## Chapter 4: Eczema and Meditation

Meditation has been used for thousands of years to alleviate depression and anxiety. With depression and anxiety being an active trigger for an eczema flareup, many people have found relief from itching through meditation. It is difficult to say whether anxiety and depression cause eczema or whether eczema causes anxiety and depression. But the link has been unequivocally established.

Just fifteen minutes a day can reestablish improved communication between the mind and body. Find a comfortable place to sit and close your eyes. Inhale deeply and slowly, then exhale. Concentrate on each intake of breath and each release of breath. It's as simple as that. Keep your focus on your breathing. When your mind wanders, and it will, simply bring it back into focus.

Researchers have studied the neurons between the prefrontal cortex and the part of the brain that deals with emotional distress.

They have found that increased activity on the left prefrontal cortex helped patients heal more quickly from anxiety. This has led to the conclusion that communication within the brain can be important to skin health.

Below is a meditation specifically to relieve itchy skin. You can record it and listen to it while you meditate. You might find it very helpful to listen to it before you go to sleep. With regular practice, you will see amazing results on your skin.

*Each time I breathe, I am grateful for my body. I respect and honor my body.*

*I relieve my body of all stress.*

*I relieve myself of all the tension in my body and especially my skin.*

*I relieve myself of all the anxiety that is in my body and skin.*

*I relieve myself of all fears that I experience with my body.*

*I give my skin permission to deal with my anxieties and fears.*

*I give my skin permission to release all irritation and inflammation that I am holding inside.*

*I take full responsibility for my skin.*

*I take full responsibility for my insecurities.*

*I give myself permission to rid my skin of any anger that it holds.*

*I give my skin permission to rid my body of frustration and irritation.*

*I rid my skin of all anger and shame.*

*I take full responsibility for all my emotions. I treasure my emotions.*

*I give my skin permission to feel confident.*

*I give myself permission to move forward with my life.*

*I give myself permission to communicate clearly with others.*

*I take responsibility for my pain and give myself permission to rid my body of all pain.*

*I am learning to accept myself just the way I am.*

*I accept any emotions and anger that may lie deep within me. I acknowledge my anger and release it.*

*I refuse to allow anyone to get under my skin.*

*I give myself permission to feel intimacy.*

*I am learning to express my feeling in a clear way.*

*I am learning not to jump to conclusions.*

*I acknowledge and honor my needs.*

*I am learning to love myself.*

*I am learning not to let my skin hold me back.*

*I thank my skin for doing the best it can to help me.*

*I enjoy the relaxation my body is feeling.*

*I feel at peace with myself.*

*I accept my skin no matter what its condition.*

*I am deserving of love.*  
*I can face the world without anxiety.*  
*I can feel my skin becoming nourished*  
*I can feel my skin becoming healthy.*  
*I enjoy having beautiful skin.*  
*I feel beautiful.*

This is a lengthy but powerful meditation that can help realign your brain and your skin.

## **Yoga for Eczema**

Like meditation, yoga is an ancient practice. Yoga philosophy began with meditation and didn't evolve into physical exercise until later.

Yoga, especially when used in conjunction with meditation, has been proven to strengthen the mind-body connection which can get so misaligned for eczema sufferers.

As an added benefit, yoga promoted intense relaxation. This helps calm the mind and the body, which includes the skin. There are

several yoga disciplines. Any one of them will promote a healthier body and ease the suffering of eczema.

Specifically, there are poses that place the head beneath the heart, such as the Downward Dog. These poses boost the flow of blood to the head to reduce red, patchy skin. Poses that involve twists help the liver rid itself of toxins and allows less “invaders” into to skin.

Yoga is all about focus. When you focus on the various poses, your mind is less focused on your struggling immune system that is irritating your skin. When calmness rules your brain, irritants lose their power. It gives your skin a chance to relax and heal itself.

# CHAPTER 5

## ECZEMA AND SKIN HYDRATION



## Chapter 5: Eczema and Skin Hydration

We know the importance of keeping hydrated. It becomes especially important if you are suffering from eczema.

### **Our Body and Water**

Did you know that your body consists of approximately 75 percent water? Our blood is 90 percent water, and our brain consists of 80 percent water. That's a lot of water!

Without proper hydration, even “normal” bodies suffer and perform at less than optimal capacity. Even a 4 percent decrease in hydration will affect our thinking and energy level.

Dehydration can serve as a quick trigger for eczema flareups. Eczema is dry skin, and when you aren't properly hydrated, you are immediately setting the itch-scratch cycle into motion.

Please note that water is the best hydrating agent. Alcohol, coffee, and energy drinks may be liquid, but they dehydrate and rob the body of needed hydration. Fruit juices are okay, but if possible, water them down.

So, if you have eczema, always keep a bottle of water at your side.

## **Wet Water Wraps**

You may not have heard of these, but wet wraps drench your skin in water and lessen the severity of eczema by up to 75 percent when applied along with your topical ointment. This can bring huge relief during a major flareup.

Wet wraps are bandages soaked in water which are wrapped around the affected area after it has been treated with ointment or cream. The wraps help reduced inflammation and soreness while they help the skin absorb the moisture for a more lasting effect. If you are using a steroid cream, the wet wrap will help deeper layers of skin absorb the steroid for greater benefit.



A side benefit of the wraps is that your inflammation is under wraps and preventing you from scratching.

If a large part of the body is being treated, indulge in a hydrating bath infused with bath oils before applying the wet wrap.

For children or large patches of adult eczema, there are garments that can be purchased for a total “wet wrap.”

These wet wraps can be used for several days until the redness disappears. Topical creams should be applied regularly each day.

Benefits of wet wraps include:

- Less itching and scratching
- Less inflammation
- Greater hydration
- Improved sleep if applied at night.

## **Eczema and Weather**

There is a direct correlation between cold weather and dry eczema skin. Everyone knows how the winter cold can dry out normal skin. It can cause serious flareups to skin with eczema, making it itchier and more inflamed. Studies have shown that the colder the weather, the more severe eczema can become.

Moving to a warmer climate is an excellent solution, and can make eczema all but disappear, but it may not always be feasible. So, it becomes especially critical to moisturize the skin several times every day and keep well-hydrated. Bathe daily in warm (not hot) bath water that has plenty of oils (consider this an indulgence!).

## **Eczema and the Right Cream and Ointment**

There is an overwhelming amount of eczema products on the market. It can be difficult to make sense of it all, but a discussion with your dermatologist can help. Then, there are some surprising lubricants the doctor may not even think of.

- Vegetable shortening, such as Crisco, contains palm oils that can be very soothing to dry skin. Vegetable shortening is thick and helps the skin retain moisture. Apply the shortening to moist skin following a shower and let the skin absorb it before getting dressed. A benefit to using vegetable shortening is that it is inexpensive, and you can use a lot of it without spending a fortune.
- Vaseline® Jelly is another soothing product that can lock in moisture. Since it can be messy, you can apply it to infected areas such as hands and feet and wear protective cotton gloves and socks.

## **Lotions and Potions**

Any cream or lotion is better than no moisturizer when you have eczema. When choosing a cream, look for one containing colloidal oatmeal, which is an ingredient that is known to soothe eczema. As mentioned earlier, even ancient Egyptians bathed in oatmeal.

Other excellent ingredients to look for are shea butter and ceramides; ingredients that specifically relieve itching. Avoid

creams that contain perfumes or alcohol, as these may cause an allergic reaction and trigger a flareup.

## **Facial Eczema**

Eczema on the face can be especially frustrating and uncomfortable to handle. Many of the steroid-based creams on the market can be too harsh for sensitive facial skin. If the rash proves stubborn, ask your dermatologist about a weaker steroid cream or a non-steroid prescription medication.

Luckily, there are several safe over-the-counter products specially formulated for eczema, so begin to check labels or ask your doctor for a recommendation. Look for creams containing zinc oxide and beeswax, both of which create a safe barrier for sensitive skin. Every skin is different, and you may need to experiment with a few brand names to determine which works best for you.

## **Eczema and Makeup**

Wearing makeup can be beneficial since it allows you to cover up any red rashes and flaking. But you need to choose your products with care.

Your first step is to moisturize your face thoroughly to prevent the makeup from drying out and becoming scaly. Avoid makeup with additives such as butylparaben and methylparaben. These can dry your skin even more and lead to increased irritation. The best makeup for eczema sufferers should contain natural oils to increase moisture.

When applying makeup, use your freshly washed fingers to gently dab on makeup instead of a makeup brush. Even brushes that are regularly cleaned can contain bacteria.

Complete your makeup routine with a facial mist to seal in moisture.

## **Phototherapy**

This is a light therapy that can be extremely effective as an eczema treatment, especially for facial skin. The treatment consists of ultraviolet light that recreates natural sunlight. Approximately 70 percent of eczema-sufferers who try phototherapy see improvement on their skin. It takes about two months to see any difference. Phototherapy can:

- Reduce annoying itch
- Reduce inflammation
- Increase the number of bacteria-fighting cells

If the treatment is successful, patients can reduce their visits to once-a-week to maintain their state of remission.

# CHAPTER 6

## HOME REMEDIES IF YOU HAVE ECZEMA



## **Chapter 6: Home Remedies if You Have Eczema**

People with eczema are quick to look at creams to remedy the problem, and these can be very helpful. However, the good news for eczema-sufferers is there are several great products right in your home that can help with the treatment of itchy skin and reduce inflammation. Discuss any home treatment with your dermatologist before beginning.

This chapter contains references to several healing baths. This refers to warm or lukewarm baths only. Hot water can irritate and dry out the skin.

### **Aloe Vera**

The healing properties of aloe vera have been known for thousands of years. It is especially soothing for the skin. Modern research has



found that aloe vera is specifically helpful in reducing skin bacteria that can cause infection. As we have discussed, frequent itching and scratching can cause the skin to become infected. Aloe vera is excellent at relieving the itch-scratch cycle.

Aloe vera is a medicinal plant, and people can get the healing gel directly from the aloe vera leaves. It is also available at health food and specialty stores. When purchasing aloe vera, read the label and make sure it contains no perfumes, alcohol or other additives which can irritate the skin.

## **Apple Cider Vinegar**

Apple cider vinegar (ACV) has so many excellent properties, some consider it a miracle liquid. It has been used since Hippocrates as a disinfectant. Its effect on eczema has not yet been confirmed. However, it is believed to have potential.

The fact is, “normal” skin has an acidic barrier with a pH level of below 5.0. The pH level in eczema sufferers is generally higher. This means that the acid barrier isn’t working properly to protect the

skin against moisture loss and the invasion of foreign organisms. Some people believe apple cider vinegar may be useful in restoring the skin's natural pH balance.

Before beginning any apple cider vinegar treatment on your skin, you should consult with your dermatologist, who can perform a patch test. With your doctor's approval, here are some ways that apple cider vinegar can fit into your eczema-curing regime:

- Take an apple cider vinegar bath. Fill your bathtub with water and add 2 cups of ACV. Soak in the tub for at least 20 minutes. Rinse and follow up with a moisturizer.
- We have discussed using wet wraps soaked in water to enhance the absorption of moisture into the skin. You can add a tablespoon of ACV to the wrap for added healing properties. Protect the wet wrap with a dry bandage and leave on overnight.

## **Bleach Bath**

This may sound like a strange eczema remedy, but it has been studied at the Mayo Clinic. Adding just ¼ cup of bleach to your bath can help improve the symptoms of eczema. Bleach kills

bacteria. Imagine where your hands have been when you give in to the urge to scratch. It's a bacteria army invading your inflamed skin the way General Sherman invaded Georgia. Bleach gets rid of harmful bacteria.

Soak in the bleach bath for 10 minutes, then dry and moisturize well. Bleach is drying, so you want plenty of moisture sealed into your skin. Don't take more than two bleach baths a week.

## **Colloidal Oatmeal Bath**

Oatmeal as a remedy for skin diseases, anxiety, and sleep goes back to ancient times, more than 3000 years ago. It was used by Egyptians and Romans. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, oatmeal baths were used in the treatment of skin inflammation.

Colloidal oatmeal is regular oatmeal ground to a fine powder which mixes well with water. A 2012 study revealed how colloidal oatmeal can bring needed relief to itchy skin. The study also showed that colloidal oatmeal can help maintain the skin's normal pH level.

Stir a cup of colloidal oatmeal into your bath water. Soak for approximately 10 minutes. Rinse off with regular water and immediately apply moisturizer.

Colloidal oatmeal is available at health food stores. Or, you can use regular oatmeal and grind it to a powder in a food processor. It won't mix with water unless ground to a very fine consistency.

Also, look for creams and moisturizers containing colloidal oatmeal.

## **Coconut Oil**

Coconut oil has a great many uses, and one of them is as a moisturizer to relieve symptoms of dry skin and itching. While many creams and lotions have additives, coconut oil is pure and natural. It's filled with a fatty acid that is extremely healthful for your entire body, including your skin.

A 2014 study showed that using coconut oil for 2 months proved especially hydrating for children suffering from eczema. The

natural oil has anti-inflammatory properties to help heal red and infected skin areas. It also decreases bacteria. This is important since eczema rashes can easily become infected.

You can apply solid coconut oil directly to the skin as you would any cream. Do this twice each day or whenever you feel itchy. For a scaly scalp, melt the coconut oil and rub into the scalp as you would any conditioner. Leave on the scalp for about 5 minutes, then rinse.

## **Honey**

A 2004 study in the *Journal of Wound Care* confirmed that a mixture of equal parts honey, olive oil, and beeswax makes an excellent anti-itch cream for eczema. This treatment is not recommended for children under the age of one.

Unprocessed honey fights bacteria and inflammation; two large triggers for eczema.

## **Tea Tree Oil**

This natural oil is derived from leaves of the Australian tea tree. It has been found to be more effective in treating eczema than the zinc oxide found in many eczema ointments. Its anti-inflammatory properties are extremely soothing to irritated skin and can reduce the redness and itching that is at the heart of eczema.

Allergies serve as a trigger for eczema, and tea tree oil decreases the effects of allergic reactions. It has been found that while high doses of tea tree oil produce excellent results in abating the symptoms of eczema, small doses have not been proven as effective.

When using tea tree oil, it's important to mix it with a few drops of carrier oil, such as coconut oil. Tea tree oil is very potent, so use a low dosage whenever possible.

# CHAPTER 7

## COPING WITH ECZEMA EVERY DAY



## **Chapter 7: Coping with Eczema Every Day**

We've discussed the role that emotions and stress play in itchy skin and eczema flareups. We've also reviewed the best natural remedies to control the symptoms of eczema.

You desperately want to live a “normal” life like everyone else. This book should certainly help you reach that goal. There are certain things you can do daily to help put eczema behind you.

### **Get Enough Sleep**

Develop good sleep habits. Eczema's constant itching makes getting a good night's sleep difficult, which only adds to your overall stress. For a better night's sleep:



1. Daily meditation can have a relaxing effect on the brain and lull you into a deep sleep.
2. Apply your favorite anti-itch cream right before going to bed to prevent overnight scratching.
3. Many people find that listening to soothing music helps them fall asleep and stay asleep more easily.

## **Dress for Eczema Success**

Of course, you want to dress with style. You can, but you need to consider your skin.

Don't wear tight clothes that will end up irritating your skin.

Avoid scratchy fabrics. And wool, which a natural fabric, can cause a great deal of itching. In addition, many children are allergic to wool, and it can trigger a rash on their skin.

Cotton is considered the top fabric for eczema sufferers. It is lightweight and doesn't cause allergies. Cotton is soft and won't

irritate your sensitive skin. Best yet, just about any clothing can be found made of cotton, from underwear to heavy outer garments.

Two other natural fabrics that are safe for eczema sufferers are linen and silk. Both are lightweight, breathable, and soft enough not to irritate your skin.

Just about any synthetic fiber will keep your skin from breathing, so those should be avoided. They also contain chemicals that can trigger an eczema allergy. Keep in mind that “polycotton blend” does not mean pure cotton. It always contains polyester.

You can also find specific eczema-friendly clothing online, which are highly recommended for children.

## **Eczema-Friendly Products in Your Home**

Avoid any cleaner or detergent with fragrances, alcohol, or other additives. That includes face creams, soaps, and bath products. Read your labels very carefully.

Household cleaners can be harsh and filled with chemicals. If you purchase a cleanser, look for the National Eczema Association seal of approval.

In addition, learn more about the cleaning power of apple cider vinegar. ACV can be used to clean tiles, linoleum, counters, blinds. You can add it to your laundry when you wash your clothes.

## **Wear Cotton Gloves**

Chemicals and additives in soaps, detergents and cleaners can severely irritate an eczema rash, especially on the hand. The frequent wetting and drying of hands during cleaning plays havoc with the skin's protective barrier.

When you do wash, use lukewarm water instead of hot. Dry your hands gently instead of rubbing harshly with a towel. And always apply moisturizer. It's a great idea to keep a jar of moisturizer by each sink that you use. Keep a travel-size moisturizer handy for when you are away from home.

Beware of antibacterial sanitizers. They don't use water, but they do contain harsh chemicals that can worsen your dry skin.

While working around the house, yard, or preparing food, use protective white gloves to keep hands clean. These gloves can be washed and reused and protect your hands from harsh outside invaders, such as bacteria and germs. Cover the white gloves with latex gloves when doing dishes. (Don't wear the latex gloves on their own because they can irritate the skin.)

## **Less Stress Every Day**

Each day will bring some type of stress. It is unavoidable. But when you suffer from eczema, stress can cause horrible flareups. Quite simply, stress can be defined as the way the mind and body respond to daily stressful stimuli. If you have eczema, you need to indulge in self-care. You matter, so learn to listen to your own needs instead of putting the needs of others ahead of your own.

## **Just Say No**

There's a whole world out there happy to claim a stake in your day. Your spouse wants you to prepare a special dinner. Your children insist on a ride to the mall. Your neighbor wants you to take care of her pets while she's away. And your boss keeps piling on the work.

A short word can greatly reduce your daily stress level. NO. Many people have difficulty with that little word, so practice until you become more assertive.

Remember, you have a choice. You can always politely refuse a request, even from those closest to you. And remember to assert your own needs. Tell your spouse you'd like to go to dinner rather than cook. Self-care means being comfortable when acknowledging your own needs. Do so and watch your stress level decrease rapidly while your skin clears up. No stress equals no rash.

## **Forget About Perfectionism**

Perfectionism is at the root of a lot of stress. You go through your day wanting everything to be perfect. That puts a heavy burden on your emotions and inevitably causes tremendous anxiety, which in turn will cause your skin to justifiably rebel.

Accept that you have nothing to prove to anyone. Sometimes, good is good enough. Usually, the need for perfectionism signals a need to avoid failure rather than a desire to succeed. There is no need to overwhelm your brain with demands for absolute perfection. Do your best; the rest will follow.

## **Eczema and Dating**

As if dating weren't stressful enough, dating when you have eczema can be a unique challenge.

Many potential relationships are destroyed because eczema sufferers are too embarrassed by their condition. It's easier to push someone away and out of your life than to discuss eczema.

The simple act of opening yourself to love has incredible emotional benefits. Discuss the situation and your fears with your potential partner. Explain that there may be flareups in your future. Any partner who doesn't understand isn't worth having in your life.

On the other hand, a partner who is willing to stand beside you on this journey is a treasure. It means he or she genuinely cares about you. How's that for a natural stress-reducer?

Love automatically brings joy and laughter into your life. Embrace the possibilities instead of avoiding them. It may be difficult at first but acknowledge your worth and keep trying.

You control your eczema. It does not control you.

# CHAPTER 8

## ALLERGY-PROOF YOUR HOME





## Chapter 8: Allergy-Proof Your Home

If you are suffering from eczema, common household allergens can make your life sheer misery. There are triggers literally around your house. Below is a plan to rid your home of allergens and potential eczema triggers forever.

### **Bedroom**

Don't turn your bedroom into a dust-mite paradise. Wash your bedding once a week. Make sure you rid yourself of any skin-irritating wool blankets.

Cover your mattress and box springs in dust-mite proof wraps.

## **Your Floors**

Let's face it. Carpets are a lure for every imaginable allergen, from dander, mold spores, and dust mites. You may not be aware of it, but there's a party happening in your carpets all the time. The deeper your carpet, the happier the festivities.

Wherever possible, replace your carpets with hardwood, tiles, or linoleum. If you must have carpeting in an area of your home, at least ensure it is low-pile and ready vacuumable. Vacuum once a day to rid yourself of the worst carpet allergens.

## **Curtains and Blinds**

Make sure your curtains and blinds are made of washable material and clean them at least once a month. Your blinds should have wide slates for easy dusting and cleaning.

## **Windows**

Fresh air is great. Unfortunately, open windows are an invitation for pollen to enter your home. Keep your windows closed and used air conditioning when needed.

## **Furniture**

Upholstering can harbor dust mites. Instead, opt for furniture made of wood, leather, and other materials that are easy to clean.

## **Clutter**

Unless you live a minimalist lifestyle, there will be a clutter. That's especially true if you have children. Dust books and knickknacks at least once a week. Place children's toys in a bin.

## **Surfaces**

Wipe down all surfaces at least once a day.

## **Pets**

You love them, but they come with allergens. If you are considering getting a pet, discuss your allergy-free option with a veterinarian. Once you have your pet, bathe it once a week.

## **Stove**

Make sure your stove has a vent fan to handle the cooking fumes.

## **Sink**

Wash your dishes after you use them. And wipe down the faucet and entire sink to remove any germs and mold.

## **Refrigerator**

Remove old food as they can create mold. Clean your refrigerator every month or every two months.

## **Walls**

Wallpaper can attract dirt and mold. Use enamel paint to color and decorate your walls.

## **Humidifier**

A humidifier will keep the air from becoming too dry during the winter months. You should keep the all-around temperature of your home at around 72 degrees.

## **Plants**

Certain houseplants are great for removing allergens from the air. Your best plant choices are:

1. Bamboo palm and other palm trees.
2. English ivy.
3. Peace lily
4. Gerbera daisy.

## **Pests**

Pests are annoying enough, but they also leave a residue that can trigger allergies. It's a good idea to have a professional exterminator fumigate your house.

Cockroaches, unfortunately a common household pest, thrive on water and moisture. Ensure that your kitchen and bathrooms are leakproof and all your containers are tightly sealed.

## **Smoking**

There should be no smoking in your entire house. No exceptions.

## **Mold**

Like cockroaches, mold grows with moisture. Remove damp clothes from your washing machine as soon as they are done. Washing machines can be a breathing ground for mold.

## **Your Yard**

You love your yard, and you should be able to enjoy it. However, it can cause sneezing and allergies that can trigger your eczema. With proper care, however, you can enjoy your yard.

Ensure that you mow your grass regularly to keep it short.

Regular fertilization of your soil will choke out allergy producers such as nestles and dandelion.

Do your yard work after it has rained. Dry days account for the highest pollen levels, so those are the days to avoid your yard if you can.

Wear long sleeves and gloves while you garden. This will keep pollen from reaching your skin and creating a rash.

Keep an eyewash in your pocket when you venture outside. This will prevent redness in the event your eyes get hit with pollen. Also, wearing sunglasses is an excellent idea.

When you are done with your yardwork, remove your clothes immediately and place them in the laundry. This will prevent pollen

on your clothes from spreading. It's also a good idea to shower and shampoo when you get back inside.

You won't be able to control the pollen from your neighbor's garden, but you can minimize pollen in your own by planting flora that is less likely to cause an allergic rash.

Azalea, fir, and dogwood trees are excellent choices. You can also plant begonias, tulips, daffodils, pansy, and nasturtium to cut down on the pollen.

With the right plants, your garden will become a source of pleasure instead of a trigger for an annoying rash.



# CHAPTER 9

## ECZEMA AND CHILDREN



## Chapter 9:

# Eczema and Children

While children who have eczema do suffer, parents need to be aware of the stress that this can cause for *them*. When a child suffers from eczema, the entire family is affected.

In a study including 38 families, it was reported that when children suffered from moderate or severe eczema, family dynamics were severely impacted. These families reported a significantly lower quality of life than families who had children without eczema. They felt it also affected their relationship. For these parent, self-care and attention to their relationship is critical to their survival.

It is also important for the children that the parents deal with the stress. Stressed-out parents are very likely to increase the stress level of children.

Most children with eczema develop symptoms before they are one year old, some as early as a month. The first step is to have the child diagnosed by a dermatologist to determine the exact type of eczema the child has.

With a small child suffering from itchiness and inflammation, everyone can be on edge. Sleeping through the night is difficult enough for infants. Add the itch factor, and the night can turn into a nightmare for both parents and child.

By the time a child reaches the age of four or five years old, it becomes aware that he or she is “different.” The rash is very visible, and the child is aware when people comment on the child’s condition. Parents need to reassure the child that this rash is not their fault as it can severely affect his or her self-esteem.

It is important that children learn not to scratch, which means parents need to remain ever vigilant. Applying a moisturizer at the first sign of itching can help the child cope. Older children should be taught to moisturize as soon as they are able to do so.

With a doctor’s approval, an antihistamine can help the child sleep through the night.

A daily routine is important to help the child cope with the - persistent itching. He or she should bathe daily in lukewarm water with a soap that is fragrance-free. Gently pat the child dry instead of rubbing the skin. The bath should be followed immediately with a moisturizing cream.

Fortunately, most children do outgrow their childhood eczema when parents provide the proper treatment. All too often, however, treatments will improve the symptoms, and parents become laxer in maintaining the same care. This then leads to a renewal of the itch cycle. Even if the symptoms slowly abate, the proper treatment needs to continue.

To help your child overcome the symptoms of eczema, try to do the following:

- Keep baths as cool and lukewarm as possible since hot water can have a drying effect on the skin.
- Always clean with non-allergenic soaps that do not contain perfumes or other additives.
- Make sure you towel-dry very gently without harsh rubbing against the skin.
- Never bathe your child without moisturizing afterward. Petroleum Jelly is especially effective. Remember to apply the moisturizer several times each day.

- Dress your child in cotton clothing or in special clothes designed for eczema sufferers.
- Snip your child's fingernails to prevent him or her from scratching and infecting the skin.
- Ensure that your child drinks enough water every day to keep moisturized.
- Help your child establish a skin-care regime so that he or she can care for him or herself.
- Recognize that school and exams can present eczema triggers for your child and be proactive in helping your child cope.

## **Your Child, Eczema, and Food Allergies**

Researchers have been studying the connection between eczema and food allergies. At times, eczema symptoms can be heightened by certain foods; in other cases, the foods themselves can trigger eczema. In either case, there is a direct link between foods and allergies related to eczema.

Eczema, hay fever, and asthma frequently occur at the same time and within the same families. Studies have determined that over 80 percent of eczema sufferers also have food allergies. Thirty percent of children were found to have both eczema and food allergies.

It is believed that food allergies weaken the immune system and skin barriers, thus creating an environment for eczema to thrive.

## **Foods that can Trigger Allergies**

Any food can cause an allergy, but there are certain foods most commonly associated with allergies and eczema symptoms:

- Eggs
- Dairy
- Sugar
- Wheat
- Nuts, especially peanuts
- Processed foods
- White pasta and bread

Many doctors suggest doing an allergy patch test for children suffering from eczema. This can help eliminate certain food

culprits. As a parent, you need to be careful of “hidden” ingredients, such as sugar in ketchup.

Reading labels is a must because many foods contain hidden triggers. Discuss your child’s diet with a certified nutritionist. Usually, fish and lots of fresh fruits and vegetables are highly recommended. Foods high in probiotics, such as kefir and sauerkraut, should also be consumed regularly.

## Conclusion

Eczema is a skin condition caused by a weakened immune system. The symptoms are redness, inflammation, and white, scaly patches of skin that can occur anywhere on the body.

There is no cure for eczema, nor is it contagious. You cannot “catch” eczema from another person. The symptoms, however, can be contained with the proper treatment. Here are some important points about eczema and how to deal with the symptoms naturally, effectively, and long-term:

- Eczema flareups are caused by a vicious itch-scratch cycle. Stop the itch, and you can break the cycle. Itches are usually brought on by certain “triggers.” These triggers can be environmental, emotional, or both.
- There is a direct tie between emotions and skin. That is why it is important to get at the root of negative feelings, such as anxiety, depression, or repressed anger. This isn’t always easy, and a trained therapist can be of invaluable help.



- Stress is debilitating for all of us. Yet, it is close to unavoidable. Stress is a part of life, but it can be much harder on those suffering from eczema for the simple reason that it will inevitably trigger a skin rash. It's important to understand exactly what triggers your stress. Then you need to find ways of calming the stress factor.
- Exercise, yoga, meditation are all proven ways to release negative feelings and embrace more positive emotions. They have been proven beneficial to eczema sufferers by calming both the brain and the skin. They have the added benefit of improving your overall quality of life daily.
- While dermatologists usually treat eczema with a steroid-based ointment, there are so many other, perhaps even more effective, ingredients you can use on your skin. You probably have many of them in your home, so try the suggestions in this book on your rash. Special moisturizers and baths can perform wonders on your dry skin and tone down the itching, which will result in less scratching and inflammation.

- Eczema is all about dry, itchy skin. Proper hydration, inside and out, is essential. Creams can help keep your skin moist. Water, and lots of it, will help hydrate the entire body. Consider water your anti-eczema trump card.
- While you are checking your home for a few special ingredients, check every room for possible allergens. Rugs, bedding, pests, dust, and dry air play havoc with your system as they easily trigger allergies. Dust mites and pests can hide anywhere and frequently do.

In some cases, this can mean doing an overhaul of major offenders, such as replacing rugs with easy-to-clean hardwood floors and wallpaper with paint. It may take some effort, but your skin will notice the difference. At the same time, you can make your garden close to allergen-free by keeping your grass low and planting non-pollinating plants. These changes will eliminate many allergy triggers from your home, and you will be able to enjoy your garden without fear.

- Parents with children face a special problem. They need to attend to their child's needs while living with constant stress. This can affect their relationship. These parents need to deal

with both their child and their own quality of life. Even if these parents do not suffer from eczema, their situation will be greatly helped if they practice some or all the anti-stress suggestions in this book. Their stress is real.

- It's good news that most children with eczema will outgrow their symptoms as they age. In the interim, they need to learn how to handle their flareups as best as they can.

Eczema is stressful and irritating, especially since there is no cure, nor is there one specific cause. Many factors can work together in creating this skin disorder. That is why every part of your life, from your emotions, stressors, and home, need to be examined thoroughly and regularly.

These elements work in unison. This can necessitate a few major lifestyle changes. It is important that you handle this one day at a time. Everyone is different, so handle your eczema-free journey at your own pace. The last thing a person with eczema needs is additional stress. Discuss specific difficulties with your dermatologist for the best and quickest results.

Be assured, however, that the suggestions for natural elimination of eczema symptoms *will* eventually work. And the

effort will be worth your while since it entails a significant improvement in your overall lifestyle. Less stress, more exercise, and a healthier body without an irritating rash await you at the end.

Eczema can disrupt and control your entire life in so many ways. This is the chance for *you* to take control and enjoy everything life has to offer. Imagine your life without rashes, inflammation, and cracking, unsightly skin. Then go and make it happen.