

Understanding Your Skin

Keep Dry Skin And Eczema Under Control

(NAPSA)—According to the University of Maryland Medical Center, approximately 15 million people in the U.S. are affected by eczema. Flare-ups of eczema result in a dry, red skin rash that is not only unsightly but can be unbearably itchy and embarrassing. Eczema can be isolated to one area or present on several areas on your body like the hands, inner elbows and the back of knees.

While eczema usually appears during childhood, people can develop it at any age. Eczema often runs in families, and can be triggered by allergies, stress, irritating detergents, synthetic fabrics, and cold.

Experts suggest anyone suffering from extremely dry skin or eczema:

- Consult a dermatologist.
- Because heat can easily zap moisture from the air in your home and also from your skin, consider investing in a humidifier for your home.
- Hot water strips the skin of its natural oils, so use lukewarm water for bathing and hand washing.
- Keep skin hydrated. Use a dermatologist-trusted moisturizer that's specifically formulated for sensitive skin, such as Eucerin Calming Creme, which contains high concentrations of oatmeal to soothe and glycerin to moisturize very dry skin and prevent skin from becoming itchy. It is also free of irritants such as perfume and detergent.

Eczema and children

Winter air may cause eczema



Children need extra skin care to protect against harsh winter weather.

to worsen on young children. According to pediatrician Dr. Sander E. Lipman, "Fifteen percent of babies experience eczema, resulting in extremely dry, itchy patches on the face, scalp and diaper area. Because they don't know better, children are more prone to scratch, which makes the affected area worse."

To calm extremely dry skin, Dr. Lipman recommends the "soak 'n' seal" solution: Bathe in lukewarm water for about 15 minutes with a gentle, nonirritating wash. Immediately after, apply a heavy, nonirritating moisturizer, such as Aquaphor Healing Ointment, to damp skin to lock in lasting moisturization.

Even though eczema can certainly be bothersome for kids and adults, taking precautions and following the doctor's orders can help to keep severely dry skin or eczema under control.