

# COMMON ECZEMA TRIGGERS

Identifying and avoiding your trigger or triggers as well as proper bathing and moisturizing are an important part of your eczema management plan.

**IRRITANTS:** Some things can make eczema worse. They are called irritants. Over time, you'll learn which things cause problems for your child. Common irritants are:

	Soaps, detergents & dryer sheets	Bubble-bath & certain shampoos	Wool or other coarse fabrics	Fragrances & dyes	Contact with juice from acidic fruits, raw meats, onion and garlic
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- Wash new clothes before putting them on your child
- Use dye-free and fragrance-free detergents and avoid using dryer sheets
- Use sunscreens made for sensitive skin

**ALLERGENS:** For some people, their skin gets itchy and inflamed when they're in contact with certain things, causing an allergic reaction. Here are some common allergens:

	House dust mites	Pets	Pollen (seasonal)	Molds
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To reduce house dust mites:

- Vacuum and wet-dust the bedroom floor and furniture frequently
- Keep soft toys to a minimum

**ENVIRONMENT:** Extremes of temperature and humidity may trigger a flare-up of eczema symptoms. Environmental triggers include:

	Hot or cold temperature	High or low humidity	Cigarette smoke	Pollution
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- Avoid letting your child get too hot or too cold
- Maintain an even temperature and humidity in your home

**FOOD:** Less than 1 in 10 children with atopic eczema have a food allergy which can make symptoms worse. In general, it is young children with severe eczema who may have a food allergy. The most common foods which trigger eczema include:

	Dairy products	Eggs	Nuts and seeds	Wheat
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- If you suspect a food is making eczema symptoms worse, see your child's doctor. You may be asked to keep a diary to help identify one or more suspect foods.

**STRESS:** Stress doesn't cause eczema, but stress, anger and frustration can make symptoms worse. If your child is having problems at daycare or school, you may notice the eczema getting worse. Stress can also cause habit scratching. It is thought that scratching can make itch worse, which makes you want to scratch more, etc. This is called the itch-scratch cycle and can make eczema worse.

- Keep your child's fingernails short. Consider cotton gloves or mittens at night if your child tends to scratch in his/her sleep

## DAILY CARE AND PREVENTION

Proper bathing and moisturizing are essential for the daily care of skin with eczema. Moisturizers can help trap water in the skin, helping keep it more flexible and less likely to crack. It is important to continue a regular moisturizing routine even when your child does not have a flare. Mild cleansing can also help prepare the skin for topical therapies. This can help keep the barrier intact and help prevent future flares.

An effective skin care regimen can help restore and strengthen the skin's moisture barrier, helping to prevent the recurrence of itchy, dry, irritated uncomfortable skin.

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