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Atopic Dermatitis (Eczema)

Recommendations

Management of atopic dermatitis should be approached in a step-wise fashion depending on the severity of dermatitis. Cream, rather than ointment form of topical medications, may be appropriate during humid weather.

1. Environmental Precautions

- Wash all new clothes before wearing them to remove formaldehyde or other chemicals.
- Residual laundry detergents in clothing may be irritating. Adding a second rinse cycle will help to remove residual soap.
- Wear garments that allow air to pass freely to the skin. Open-weave, loose fitting cotton and cotton blend clothing may be beneficial. Wool garments generally irritate the skin.
- Work, play and sleep in comfortable surroundings at fairly constant temperatures and low humidity.
- Fingernails should be kept short and smooth in order to prevent irritation due to scratching.
- After swimming or hot tub use, use a gentle soap like Dove or Oil of Olay head to toe and then immediately apply a moisturizer or sealer to the total body.
- Understanding the chronicity of disease and seeking appropriate support to deal with the anxiety, anger and frustration is helpful.

2. Mild Atopic Dermatitis or Maintenance Care

- Bathe once or twice each day using warm, but not hot, water for at least 15 to 20 minutes
- Soaps should be avoided except for areas where they are needed. A mild soap, such as unscented Dove or Oil of Olay Sensitive Skin Formula should be used as needed.
- Gently pat away water and immediately apply a moisturizer or skin medication such as a topical steroid to damp skin. Applying topicals in this manner will seal the water in and make the skin less dry and itchy. Moisturizers or sealers, such as Vanicream or Vaseline, should not be applied on top of topical steroids.
- Hydrocortisone 1 or 2.5% ointment should be applied to areas of eczema anywhere on the body after baths. They may be applied one additional time during the day.
- Moisturizers, such as Aquaphor ointment, Eucerin Cream, or Vanicream, should be applied generously to clear areas immediately after the bath. They may be applied

anywhere on the body and should be used at least twice daily. Moisturizers should not be applied over topical steroids.

- T/Sal or other medicated shampoos should be used minimally twice a week to control flaking in the hair. This may need to be used daily.

3. Moderate Atopic Dermatitis

- Bathe twice daily for 20 minutes each in warm water morning and evening.
- Hydrocortisone 2.5% ointment to less severely affected areas on face, groin, and underarms after bath.
- Triamcinolone ointment 0.1% to the severely affected areas on the body and DesOwen ointment 0.05% to less severely affected areas on the body after bath.
- Vanicream or Vaseline ointment should be applied to unaffected areas after bath and to the entire body mid-day bath.
- Wet socks covered by dry socks during sleeping hours over hands and feet when involved.
- Consider Bactroban ointment to localized superinfected lesions three times daily.

4. Severe Atopic Dermatitis

- Bathe three times daily for 20 minutes each in warm, not hot, water, occurring morning, mid-day, and at bedtime. Wet face cloth with eyes and mouth cut out for hydration with facial involvement.
- Hydrocortisone 2.5%, ointment applied to the affected areas on the face, underarms, and groin after the morning and bedtime bath.
- Triamcinolone 0.1% ointment to other areas of skin eczema involvement after the morning and bedtime bath.
- Vaseline should be applied to the unaffected areas after morning and bedtime bath, and to the entire body after mid-day bath.
- Wet pajamas or wet underwear followed by dry pajamas after each bath, for a minimum of two to three hours
- Wet socks followed by dry socks to hands and feet after each bath leaving on a minimum of two to three hours.
- Culture lesions consistent with secondary infections for Staph sensitivity, and consider instituting appropriate oral antibiotic.
- Use sedating antihistamines at home, such as Benadryl or hydroxyzine at bedtime or during the day for severe itching.
- Use T/Sal or other medicated shampoo daily.