

## Primary care and community settings

### Assessment of a child with atopic eczema:

- 1. Confirm diagnosis (What are the clinical features of atopic eczema?)
- 2. Assess severity including impact on activities of daily living (ADLs) see severity assessment p2.
- 3. Is there psychosocial impact?
- 4. Is the child growing normally?
- 5. Consider triggers:
  - Irritants: Avoid soap and shower gels, and reduce frequency of shampoo. In under 12 months no need for shampoo
  - Contact allergy: Is there a sudden flare of previously controlled eczema? Reaction to skin treatment or other products?
  - Food allergens: Eczema increases the risk of food allergy and the association is stronger in severe eczema. Most cases present with classical features of food allergy with immediate symptoms involving at least two organ systems (<1 hour after exposure) e.g. urticaria/angiodema, GI or respiratory symptoms. Food allergy causing eczema is rare and cannot be diagnosed by tests (blood or skin tests).
  - if immediate symptoms (<1 hour) of non-milk food allergy refer to local paediatric service
  - if symptoms of cows milk allergy, follow management guidelines
  - if non-immediate symptoms for food allergy
  - eczema and symptoms in another organ (e.g. poor growth or gastrointestinal symptoms) refer to local allergy service
  - if eczema is only symptom, as it is unusual for food allergy to cause eczema, refer to dermatology for assessment.

Prolonged elimination diets may be harmful (NICE Guidance), extensive elimination diets in those <2 years should only be recommended under specialist advice. For those currently tolerating food without immediate symptoms, avoidance may increase the likelihood of developing immediate reactions (due to loss of tolerance) so trials of elimination should be kept short (max 4 weeks). However for babies who develop moderate to severe eczema under 3-6months of age it is very reasonable to do a 4 week trial of a diary free diet...

Inhalant: seasonal flares? Asthma and hay fever? Facial eczema, especially around eyes, in > 3 years. Consider trial of antihistamines

- Infection: Bacterial Weeping, crusting, not responding to treatment or worsening, unwell. Note: most children with infected eczema do not benefit from antibiotic therapy (oral or topical) - except those with a severe infection. Optimisation of topical steroids is the mainstay of treatment in these patients
- Viral(Eczema herpeticum): rapid worsening, fever/lethargy, clustered blisters, punched out erosions. Refer to same day paediatrics.

#### Treatment of atopic eczema in children

- 1. See treatment ladder for management of active eczema and subsequent preventer treatment: page 2
- 2. Provide family with clear information about how to apply topical treatment (How to apply treatment videos)
- 3. Decide if referral to secondary care is required (See page 2)
- 4. Patient information leaflet from British Association of Dermatologists can be helpful on atopic eczema

#### **Bandages/Therapeutic garments**

- Consider elasticated garments/therapeutic clothing (various eczema specific brands available) for all severe eczema patients
- Apply over topical steroids for one week rotating with use over emollients for a further week and repeat as required (How to apply treatment videos)
- Bandages are useful for thickened or heavily excoriated areas (not if infected) but should be under specialist recommendation in younger children.





# Atopic eczema in children clinical pathway



## Primary care treatment ladder for managing atopic eczema in children

All patients (even when atopic eczema clear) to use regular Emollients (ointments are preferred) to moisturise and wash (250-500g/week) NOTE: Fire risk with all paraffin and non-paraffin containing emollients. Antihistamines not routinely used in eczema (exceptions to the rule). Oral Prednisolone not recommended. Use the weakest effective corticosteroid treatment How to apply treatment videos



The guidance was written by healthcare professionals across Wessex, Wexham and -rimlev

This document was arrived at after careful consideration of the evidence available including but not exclusively NICE, SIGN, EBM data and NHS evidence, as applicable. Healthcare professionals are expected to take it fully into account when exercising their clinical judgement. The guidance does not, however, override the individual responsibility of healthcare professionals to make decisions appropriate to the circumstances of the individual patient in consultation with the patient and / or carer.



Preventer treatment

For when skin is clear /almost clear disease not itchy / not inflamed

## AGE 0-2 years

Mild potency corticosteroid ointment e.g. 1% hydrocortisone ointment once to twice a week to commonly affected sites

#### AGE 2+ years

Moderate potency corticosteroid ointment e.g. clobetasone ointment once to twice a week to commonly affected sites (1% hydrocortisone ointment for face)

## ADD IN by clinicians experienced in eczema care

**Calcineurin inhibitors STEROID SPARING Topical tacrolimus ointment** 0.03% (2+ years) 0.1% (16+ years) Routine: 2 x weekly On advice: 1-2x daily **OR Topical pimecrolimus cream** (2+ years) for facial eczema

# **EMERGENCY REFERRAL** (same day)

 Possible eczema herpeticum · Possible bacterial infection with systemic symptoms/features of sepsis Erythroderma (≥90% of body surface area affected)