Common Treatment Options to Help Fight Eczema

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Eczema Treatment Options: From Home Remedies to Prescriptions

Are you tired of dry, itchy, bumpy skin? Do you want to have smoother skin and minimize your eczema flare-ups? Finding an eczema treatment that works can be trying, but it's not impossible.

The good news is that you can take control of your eczema with the right tools. Read on and learn more about various eczema treatments that can help reduce flare-ups and help curb other symptoms.

Prescription Eczema Treatment

If you have moderate to severe eczema, your doctor may prescribe medications to help treat your eczema. There are a number of prescription medications on the market. These can be divided into topical medications, and systemic medications.

Topical Medications

Topical medications are applied to your skin. There are several topical medications used to treat eczema.

- **Steroids:** When you have eczema, your skin becomes inflamed. Steroids work as anti-inflammatories and help calm your angry, inflamed skin. Typically, steroids are the first line of treatment if you have moderate to severe eczema. Notably, prescription steroid creams for eczema are more potent than over-the-counter steroids. Hence, there is more risk of side effects if you do not use them according to your doctor's directions. These side effects include stretch marks and thinning of your skin.
- **Calcineurin inhibitors:** Eczema occurs as a result of an overactive immune system. Calcineurin inhibitors act on certain parts of your immune system in order to reduce eczema flare-ups. Your doctor will prescribe calcineurin inhibitors if prescription steroids are not working to clear up your eczema. Side effects of calcineurin inhibitors include a slight burning sensation when you first put this medication on your skin.
- **Phosphodiesterase4 (PDE4) inhibitors:** This medication blocks the PDE4 enzyme (an inflammation-causing enzyme). Side effects of PDE4 inhibitors include skin irritation on the area where you apply the medication to your skin.

Systemic Medications

If your eczema is quite severe, your doctor may prescribe systemic medications. Systemic medications are medications that affect your whole body, including your skin.

Unlike topical medications, you need to take these medications by mouth or by injection. Examples include steroids, cyclosporine, methotrexate, and biologics.

Over-the-Counter Eczema Treatment Options

Over-the-counter eczema treatment options do not require a prescription. However, even though they do not require a prescription, they may still have side effects. The following treatment options are available over-the-counter:

- **Steroids:** Milder doses of steroids are available over the counter. For example, hydrocortisone is available in 0.5% to 1% concentrations. These steroids are helpful if you have mild to moderate eczema.
- **Oral antihistamines:** These help relieve itchy skin, and, due to their sedative effect, can help you sleep. Examples include Allegra and Benadryl.
- **Medicated shampoos:** These shampoos contain ingredients that help relieve eczema on your scalp.
- **Moisturizers:** These help relieve dry skin. Moisturizers also help reduce the frequency and severity of eczema flare-ups.
- **Coal Tar:** Coal tar softens the outer layer of your skin so that your skin is not dry. It comes in soap, cream, ointment, and gel forms.

Lifestyle Changes to Help Manage Eczema

There are also several eczema treatments that you can try at home. Many of these are simple lifestyle changes that can help reduce flare-ups.

Moisturizing Your Skin

If you have eczema, chances are that you have dry skin. You should apply moisturizers – or an eczema lotion – as often as you can, particularly after having a bath. In fact, you should aim to moisturize your skin immediately after having a bath to prevent your skin from getting dry. Moisturizing your skin is vital as research shows that moisturizing your skin prevents flare-ups.

Taking a Warm Bath

Bathing daily will help keep your skin clean and reduce itchiness from eczema. However, limit your bath to 10 minutes as soaking in the tub for extended periods can dry your skin. In addition, you want to have a warm bath, not a hot one, as the heat will dry out the skin more.

After having a bath, you should pat yourself dry rather than scrubbing yourself dry with a towel. If you scrub yourself dry, you risk irritating your skin.

Use Gentle Soap and Cleansers

If you have eczema, you also likely have sensitive skin. As a result, you will want to choose soaps and cleansers that are designed for sensitive skin. The products you choose should be fragrance-free, so they don’t irritate your skin. They should also moisturize your skin.

Wear Cool Fabrics

Did you know that what you wear or sleep on could trigger eczema flare-ups? Case in point, my brother who suffers from eczema flare-ups changed his bed sheets to cotton and noticed an improvement in his eczema.

Why? Cotton is smooth, so it minimizes irritation on your skin. Additionally, it breathes well so you don’t sweat.

Wash Your Clothes Properly

When cleaning your clothes, you want to use a gentle detergent to wash your clothes with. You should also try and use the double rinse cycle to get all the detergent out of your clothes.

Find Time to Relax

When you are stressed, you may be more likely to scratch your skin, which will make your eczema worse. To avoid this, try engaging in deep breathing exercises, yoga, or other relaxing activities that will help manage your stress.