



What Parents Need to Know About Baby Eczema

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Signs, Symptoms and Treatment Options for Baby Eczema

When preparing to welcome a newborn into the family, parents are attuned to all sorts of potential maladies. Rashes are a common concern, and all sorts of creams and powders are used to mitigate diaper discomfort and other skin troubles. However, something that may go overlooked when prepping for infant care is baby eczema.

Baby eczema is extremely common and affects up to 20% of babies and very young children. That's not to say it is easily ignored; baby eczema can cause itching and discomfort, and if there is anything a parent strives for, it is a happy, comfortable infant.

Most babies will outgrow their eczema within the first year of their life, although some will experience it well into childhood, and a few for their whole lives. Luckily, treating baby eczema is possible. If it has been correctly identified in the first place, your doctor can establish a course of action.

Read on to learn more about how to keep your infant's skin healthy and manage outbreaks and symptoms of baby eczema.

What is Baby Eczema?

Like the eczema that affects adults, it is a skin condition that usually manifests as a raised, reddish rash. It can be itchy and sensitive, and usually appears dry and crusty. Some people confuse it with another skin condition that affects infants called cradle cap, which looks similar to the untrained eye. A major difference is that cradle cap usually looks less scaly and red than eczema, and typically disappears within eight months.

Baby eczema can run in families, so parents who have eczema are more likely to conceive an infant who has it. As is the case with adult eczema, baby eczema is caused when there are too few fatty cells produced in the skin barrier, which lets in germs and lets moisture out, which causes dryness.

In most cases, baby eczema will completely disappear on its own before your child is even enrolled in school. With that said, for parents who have ever had to cope with an uncomfortable baby before, waiting that long isn't always an option.

Causes, Symptoms and Locations of Baby Eczema

Adult eczema and eczema babies get are very similar. It's a skin condition defined by dry, scaly, itchy skin that manifests as a raised, reddish rash. On babies, it can appear anywhere on their body, but is most commonly found on their cheeks and joints.

As mentioned above, there is a hereditary link between parents with eczema and their children experiencing it. While the root cause is a lack of fatty cells in the skin which allows too much moisture out, there are many factors

that can further aggravate it.

Dryness

When ambient moisture is low (such as in the wintertime) your baby's skin can become more prone to eczema. Simply employing a humidifier, or using conventional moisturizers, can mitigate this.

Heat

If it is hot outside or in your home, your baby might be more prone to eczema. Not just because of the dryness that heat naturally promotes, but also because it promotes sweating, which is a key eczema trigger in babies.

Allergies

Information on what allergens trigger eczema is not widely available. Some parents believe restricting their infant's diet from cow's milk, eggs and other similar foods can greatly improve eczema symptoms.

Irritation

Babies have very delicate skin that can be irritated by rough, synthetic fabrics. Oils found in scented cosmetic products can also irritate your baby's skin, triggering an eczema outbreak.

Stress

Stress isn't just for adults — babies can have it too. When they are upset, infants tend to flush, which makes their skin hot and red. This can lead to an eczema outbreak.

Treatment for Baby Eczema

If you are concerned about your baby's eczema, make sure to talk to your doctor and follow their advice and baby eczema treatment plan. However, for most infants, their eczema will be largely harmless and pass with time. Here's what you can do to treat the symptoms at home.

Lotions and Moisturizers

If eczema is triggered by dryness, keeping your baby moisturized is a great way to limit symptoms. Make sure you use an unscented, baby-specific eczema lotion.

Dress Your Baby Comfortably

Tight, synthetic fabrics can cause rubbing, which exacerbates baby eczema. Dress your child in loose cotton clothing to minimize the risk of uncomfortable rubbing and eczema flare-ups.

Be Careful When Bathing Your Baby

Use gentle soaps when you give your baby a bath. Avoid scented and antibacterial varieties, and only use soap on the parts of your baby that are actually dirty. Be sure to give the rest of their body a good rinse. Try using lukewarm water if it is not too hot for their skin, as it will help hydrate their skin. Finally, make sure to gently pat them dry instead of rubbing their skin with a towel.

Final Considerations

Eczema in babies is completely normal and common, but that doesn't mean you cannot take steps to ensure your infant is as comfortable as possible. By knowing what to look for, how the symptoms appear and what home treatments you can use, your baby will have a healthy, happy infancy with minimal eczema.
