

Childhood Eczema

Bringing a new baby into the world is filled with surprises, joy, challenges and often frustration. After being protected for nine months within our bellies new born baby's emerge only to face a world of foreign substances that can be potentially harmful. As mothers we do our very best to continue to protect and nurture our little ones, but sometimes that doesn't seem to be enough. Surrounded by environmental pollutants babies can sometimes develop health challenges that manifest on their skin. It is our jobs as mothers to minimize the risks of future illness by taking some preventative measures to ensure a healthy and happy child.

The latest statistics reveal that 90% of children under the age of five will experience some type of childhood eczema. Eczema is characterized by small blisters which fill with colorless fluid and burst leaving the skin cracked, scaly and weepy with possible bleeding. Eczema is usually a result of an allergy or sensitivity to a chemical or food which is compounded by an immature immune system. Baby's immune systems remain extremely underdeveloped until the age of two. During the first years of life it is very important to reduce your child's exposure to possible triggers of eczema. The most common culprits are wheat, dairy, eggs, soy and chemical laden creams, soaps and shampoos. Cow's milk is particularly suspect because of the animal's exposure to herbicides and pesticides. Choosing an organic dairy product will greatly limit your child's risks.

If you do have a child suffering from eczema, taking the following steps may help to alleviate the symptoms:

- Try an elimination diet-remove the potential allergens (dairy, wheat, soy, eggs), one every week until the skin improves. Once you know which food is the offender keep it out of their diet for 3 months and then slowly reintroduce it carefully watching for flare-ups.
- Supplement your baby's diet with flax seed oil. Try drizzling one teaspoon on their cereal in the morning. If you are exclusively breastfeeding, rub the oil over your nipples before each feed.
- If your baby is formula fed consider switching to a hypoallergenic formula such as Nutremagen by Enfamil.
- If your child is on solid foods-feed them only organic fruits and veggies. Consider getting an organic delivery service to drop a box of fresh produce on your doorstep once every week.
- Replace all baby products with natural and organic alternatives.
- Invest in a natural herbal baby eczema cream or salve. Or try making your own with any or all of the following herbs; Marshmallow, Chickweed, Comfrey, Red Clover, Witch Hazel, Calendula and Lavender.

Babies have extremely sensitive skin and it is important to use only natural products free of chemicals and preservatives. Remember "you are what you eat" so choose organic foods for your family.