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ATOPIC DERMATITIS (ECZEMA)

Atopic Dermatitis is a chronic skin disorder which tends to be very common in 75-80% of families with a history of allergies or asthma. Atopic Dermatitis is not a rash that itches, but an itch that causes a rash. Scratching the itch leads to trauma and inflammation which perpetuates the rash. The goal of therapy is to control this chronic, incurable disorder. Fortunately, most children will outgrow this problem.

HYDRATION

Skin hydration is the key therapy. Water is retained by applying bland creams and occasionally a more occlusive agent such as Vaseline within minutes of bathing and then periodically throughout the day. Keeping the skin lubricated helps seal in moisture and decreases the intense itching which accompanies Atopic Dermatitis. Several antihistamine medications may also help control itching and scratching. Secondary infections, such as Staphylococcus and Streptococcus, can occur and may require antibiotic treatment. Occasional steroid creams or ointments are used to treat ongoing rashes on a periodic basis and should NOT be used on a daily basis, as their effectiveness will decrease.

REMEMBER THESE IMPORTANT GOALS & TIPS

1. HYDRATION
2. LUBRICATION
3. PREVENT EXCORIATION (Scratching)
4. TREAT INFLAMMATION AND/OR INFECTION PROPERLY
5. Wash and rinse twice all new clothes BEFORE wearing.
6. Wear garments which allow air flow, such as cotton, and avoid stiff garments, such as wool.
7. Maintain a comfortable, constant humid environment.
8. Avoid sunburn and only use Paba-free sunscreens.
9. Avoid products with perfumes, lanolin, and aloe vera.