

## Summer Skin Tips



Winter is known for being the worst season for eczema, but summer can also present some challenges. Often we are in holiday mode and are often taking breaks, and out of our regular environments and routines, including our regular eczema skincare routine.

So why is summer such a tricky time for eczema? For one, increased heat and humidity can lead to more sweating. Sweating is enemy No 1 for eczema-prone skin in the summer, because it can lead to increased aggravation.

Sweat contains various salts that can be irritating to broken skin, such as eczema skin, and sweat can contain zinc, copper, iron, nickel, cadmium, lead, manganese, sodium, and chloride, and when these build up, irritation could result. You may notice eczema worsens mainly in areas where moisture gets trapped, such as the elbows, the back of the neck, or the backs of the knees.

Sweat also makes the skin very dry, and dry skin is itchy skin. This dry skin environment then attracts bacteria to live on the skin's surface. When we itch, the bacteria gets into the skin causing inflammation and often infection."

Secondly, an increase in allergens in the environment - pollen, for example - can incite histamine release, which causes itching. Jumping into the water and slathering on sunscreen – two common summertime habits - can also cause the eczema you thought you had under control to go into turmoil.

Thirdly, we are in holiday mode and are often taking breaks, and out of our regular environments and routines, including our regular eczema skincare routine.

Here are some tips for managing eczema in the Summer:

- **Stay Cool and Avoid Sweating**

Staying cool by avoiding excessively warm temperatures and reducing sweating is important. Stick to the shade when you're outside. Keep indoors during the warmest part of the day. Being inside means you are more able to control the temperature and also makes it easier to use cool compresses to take the heat out of your child's skin if you need to. Dressing your child in a damp singlet when inside will help to lower their body temperature.

- **Drink Enough Water**

Be sure to drink plenty of water, too. That will help keep your body at a normal temperature.

- **Choose a Physical (or Mineral) Sunscreen**

Choosing a physical sunscreen (sometimes called a mineral sunscreen) versus a chemical one is the best option for people with eczema. Some chemical sunscreens can be irritating to sensitive skin, and physical sunscreens are also more moisturising.

- **Sunscreen product suggestions**

Here are some examples of mineral-based, unfragranced products which seem to suit many people with eczema. This is not an exhaustive list:

- La Roche-Posay Anthelios range SPF50
- Mustela Very High Protection Sun Lotion SPF50
- SunSense Kids SPF50
- SunSense Sensitive SPF50
- Neutrogena Sheer Zinc Dry Touch
- Wotnot Natural Sunscreen SPF 30
- Wotnot Natural Baby Sunscreen SPF 30
- Invisible Zinc 4hr Water Resistant Sunscreen Lotion SPF50

We do not recommend any one sunscreen; as what suits one person will not necessarily suit another.

- **Change Out of Wet Clothing as Soon as You Can**

Staying dry should be your summertime mantra if you're struggling with eczema-prone skin. If you feel perspiration start to build and your T-shirt start to stick to your back, for instance, swap your wet clothes for dry ones as soon as you can.

- **Use an Air Purifier to Battle Environmental Triggers**

Consider buying an air purifier for your home to decrease the presence of dust and other allergens.

- **Rinse Off Immediately After You Go Swimming**

Chemicals found in chlorinated pools and salt found in the ocean could be a problem for those with sensitive skin as they can dry out the skin. Just in case there's no shower in sight, bring along a spray bottle filled with water and use it to rinse off immediately afterward. Follow up by reapplying moisturiser and sunscreen to protect the skin and keep it from drying out.

- **Bathe or Shower Daily to Keep Skin Clean**

Taking a bath or shower each day can help clear the skin of bacteria as well as sweat and dust that may have accumulated over the course of the day. Always be sure to use a suitable soap free wash and moisturise immediately after.

- **Moisturise with Ceramides to Restore the Skin's Barrier**

Levels of ceramides, which are lipids naturally found in the skin, decrease when skin is dry, no matter if it's winter or summer. A moisturiser that contains ceramides can help restore the skin's protective barrier and hydration. QV and CeraVe are brands that have moisturisers containing ceramides which can aid in repairing the skin barrier.

- **Put your skin creams in the fridge**

If the skin is really hot, try putting your moisturiser and/or steroid creams in the refrigerator to numb the hot skin quickly when applied.

- **Ice blocks are your new best friend**

Keeping the body hydrated and trying to reduce your child's core body temperature decreases the temperature at the skin's surface. The cooler the skin is in summer, the less itchy it will be. Keep sips of cold water going throughout the day, and ice blocks can be used as a treat that will help increase fluid and also cool the body. Freeze pure fruit juices to make your own icy poles. If you are on a dairy-free diet, look out for soy or dairy free ice cream.

- **Going swimming? Be prepared**

If you plan on swimming, moisturising half an hour before your child gets into the water will put a barrier on the skin to help stop irritation from the water. After swimming, rinse your child before you leave the beach or pool and apply your moisturiser straight after. Always use your sunscreen so you're not tempted to borrow somebody else's that might irritate your child's skin.

- **Cotton clothes, cotton bedding**

Loose fitting cotton clothing is least likely to trap heat in the body and allow you to stay cool. Make sure you are sleeping in cotton sheets and use only cotton blankets for cooler nights. Doonas trap heat around the body, increasing body temperature, sweating and itching. Opt for loose-fitting clothes in breathable fabrics (think wicking shirts and cotton or linen).

- **Keep up your regular eczema skincare routine**

Making the time, even when you are on holidays, to keep to your regular eczema skincare routine is key to keeping flare-ups to a minimum and your eczema well managed. Take a travel pack with your favourite products if you are travelling and make sure you have enough to last in case they are not available at your destination.

- **Consider Phototherapy to Help Prevent Flares**

This treatment option uses ultraviolet light, which is the same as sunlight minus the damaging aspects. Controlled exposure to ultraviolet light during the daytime can improve eczema and prevent flares due to the anti-inflammatory properties of ultraviolet B wavelengths.

*The information in this article was obtained from  
[www.everydayhealth.com/eczema/strategies-avoiding-eczema-flare-ups-summer](http://www.everydayhealth.com/eczema/strategies-avoiding-eczema-flare-ups-summer)  
[www.kidspot.com.au/health/disorders/how-to-manage-your-childs-eczema-in-the-heat](http://www.kidspot.com.au/health/disorders/how-to-manage-your-childs-eczema-in-the-heat)*

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