

Spring Skin Tips



Spring is a feel-good time of year – not only does the springtime make us feel better in general, but it can also be more pleasant for eczema sufferers too with the temperatures being favourable – not too hot, not too cold.

However, it also brings flowers and a massive increase in pollen and other allergens. This increase in environmental irritants is not great for anyone already struggling with the health of their skin, making the transition period from winter into spring a common time for eczema flare-ups.

Eczema sufferers will know all too well that the itch is very real. From the moment you wake up in the morning to putting out the lights at night, it's a constant struggle to fight the urge to itch your inflammation away.

Pollens from flowering plants and trees can trigger springtime allergies—and a related eczema flare-up. That's because many people with eczema experience the atopic triad: the tendency for eczema, allergies (hay fever), and asthma to occur together.

Here are some tips for managing eczema in the Spring:

- Keep up the fluids (especially water) to keep the body's core temperature from rising.
- Moisturise, moisturise, moisturise, and make sure you have plenty of your favourite one on hand.
- Visit your pharmacist for advice on antihistamines if you are a hay fever sufferer – they can also be useful for helping with itchy skin.
- Change your products – if you have been using an ointment for moisturising during the winter this may now heat up the skin too much – change to a cream or lotion and apply more often.
- On warm days, wear loose cotton clothing to avoid overheating and experiencing eczema from sweat and eczema heat rash. Dress in layers so you can take off excess clothing throughout the day.

- Pop your skin moisturiser in the refrigerator so it is very cooling to numb itchy skin quickly.
- Stay away from open windows to reduce exposure to allergens and keep your car windows up and put your car air conditioner on air recirculate.
- Consider getting an air purifier for your home to help combat allergens.
- Try to organise your day so you're out and about in the early morning and later in the afternoon. Avoiding the hottest parts of the day can really help manage those eczema symptoms.
- Avoid line-drying your clothes outside – pollen can land on your clean washing and then irritate your skin when you put your clothes on.
- While outdoors, wear an eczema-friendly sunscreen that won't irritate your skin and cover up with loose clothing over to avoid collecting allergens on your skin.
- Reapply your sunscreen regularly especially if you are swimming.
- When you have been out and about in the environment, particularly parks and gardens, have a quick rinse off back at home and reapply your moisturiser.
- Use a humidifier help to keep your skin hydrated and improve the moisture content in the air especially if you are using your air conditioner to combat the warmer weather. Using your indoor air conditioning can dry out the air in your house which in turn dries out your skin, which can exacerbate your eczema. Be sure to regularly clean the machine, as mould can easily build up and contaminate your air quality.
- Avoid sitting directly on sand or grass as this can really irritate your skin. Make sure you have a blanket or rug with you on these occasions.
- The UV rays from the sun can dry out the skin and trigger eczema flare-ups. While it can be nice to soak up some sunshine after a long winter, being mindful of how much sun exposure your skin gets will help you avoid unwanted skin irritation.
- Wipe down surfaces with a damp cloth every day - this will pick up the dust and pollen that has settled.
- If you feel like you're losing the battle with your weather-related symptoms, see your doctor or dermatologist. They can help you pinpoint the causes and can also prescribe different or more powerful remedies, including corticosteroid creams or ointments and antihistamines.
- Avoid your environmental triggers, at least the ones you can control. If you are allergic to dust mites, it is best to use avoidance methods to decrease exposure.
- Get tested for environmental allergies. Know if you are reacting to the spring pollen. AIT (allergy immunotherapy) may be a helpful therapy.
- Most important of all - don't panic when you experience a flare – back to basics!

Ultimately, you can stay on top of eczema management by planning ahead for the spring and summer and staying consistent with your eczema treatment.

*The information in this article was obtained from
National Eczema Society, www.scratchsleeves.co.uk, www.comvita.com.au, itchybabyco.com.au,
<https://gladskin.com/eczema-in-spring>, www.webmd.com/skin-problems-and-treatments/eczema-weather-tips,
www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/tips-for-eczema-management-in-spring-and-summer*

This Information Sheet is provided as a service by the Eczema Association of New Zealand Inc to give up-to-date, practical help on certain types of eczema or a particular aspect of its treatment. These sheets are part of our membership package.

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