



ECZEMA – IRRITANTS

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Environmental factors can have a big effect on your eczema. To prevent irritation, you should minimize the use of soaps. Deodorant soaps are often very harsh and drying. If you need them, limit their use to areas that develop an odor such as the armpits, genital area, and feet. Recommended soaps are Dove, Olay and Basis. Even better than soap is non-soap cleansing agents such as Cetaphil Lotion, Oilatum-AD and Aquanil. Since residual laundry detergent in clothes may also be irritating, in some a second rinse cycle is beneficial. Use a perfume and color free detergent such as Cheer-free or All-free.

Hand dermatitis occurs commonly in adult eczema patients. Here it is especially important to avoid irritant contact with solvents, soaps and detergents. Also avoid jobs and hobbies that require exposure to these irritants, as well as to dust, dirt, and heat. If you wash frequently, it is important to apply moisturizers after hand washing; also trying a non-water cleansing method, such as Cetaphil, may be beneficial. Wearing appropriate gloves when using potential irritants is also important. There are barrier creams, which can be applied 10-15 minutes before coming into contact with irritants, that may help reduce flares.

If sweating causes itching, modify your activity and surroundings to minimize sweating. Work and sleep in a fairly constant temperature (68-75 F) and humidity (45-55%). Wear open-weave, loose-fitting garments made of cotton blends, rather than wool or stiff fabrics.

This information has been provided to you compliments of the American Osteopathic College of Dermatology and your physician.

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