

# Birth Defect Fact Sheet

## Birth Defect Research for Children

# Eczema

### What is Eczema?

Children with eczema have an itchy red rash that is rough and inflamed skin with blisters that can result in bleeding or infection if they are scratched. The most common type of eczema is called atopic dermatitis or atopic eczema. Some babies are born with eczema which affects about 10% to 20% of infants. Children with eczema may also go on to develop other allergic conditions like asthma and hay fever.



**BIRTH DEFECT RESEARCH  
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## What are the symptoms of Eczema?

Eczema is always itchy. Sometimes the itching begins before the rash appears especially when eczema is on the face, back of the knees, wrists, hands and/or feet. The affected patches are very dry, thickened or scaly. In babies, the eczema rash can result in oozing and crusting.

## What Causes Eczema?

Eczema is caused by an overactive response of the body's immune system to an irritant. It is often found in children with a family history of allergies and/or asthma. Triggers for eczema may include certain foods, soaps and detergents, animal dander, changes in the weather and scratchy fabrics

## How can Eczema be treated?

Your doctor may suggest allergy testing to identify the triggers for your child's eczema. Some triggers can then be avoided like certain foods. Allergy treatment may help for other triggers like animal dander. If eczema appears, the goal is to reduce itching and scratching. This can be done with lotions and creams to moisturize the skin and other medications your doctor may recommend to reduce inflammation and itching. If scratching eczema results in a bacterial infection, your doctor may also prescribe an antibiotic.

## Does Eczema last past childhood?

Most children outgrow infant eczema, but about 3% of children continue to have eczema off and on into adulthood.

**Fact Sheet by:**

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