

Written by Professor Hywel Williams, Dr Ruth Murphy, Dr Jane Ravenscroft, Nurse Consultant Sandra Lawton and parents on behalf of the Nottingham Support Group for Carers of Children with Eczema.

Atopic Eczema: Sun, Holidays and Fun - Information for Parents

Will my child's eczema get better or worse on holiday?

Eczema affects children in different ways, so it is hard to predict how your child's eczema will behave on holiday. Generally, most children improve on holiday as everyone is relaxed and having fun. Some children find that heat can make their eczema worse, especially when they sweat a lot. Others find that a bit of gentle sun and sea clears their eczema completely for a while. Everyone is different.

Things to think about when taking your child on holiday

As eczema is a dry itchy skin condition, there are many things that may irritate the skin. i.e. wool, some foods, sand, wind, pollen, water and extremes or changes in temperature. A child with a lot of eczema covering most of their body may not be able to sweat as effectively as other children, or they may find that the sweat makes them itch. Dry heat and low humidity can cause problems for children with eczema, as do sudden changes in temperature and humidity. So, to make sure things go smoothly for your holidays, remember to think about the following:

Supplies - Remember to order enough supplies for all your child's treatment well in advance. Even if your child's eczema is under control, remember to take your eczema treatment kit with you.

Emollients – In hotter weather, you may find a less greasy cream will be better during the day as some children find a very thick greasy emollient makes them hot and itchy.

Swimming – Water can irritate eczema skin. Even so, many parents find that the seawater actually helps their child's eczema. Salt water may have a mild antiseptic action. If your child goes swimming, please put on their emollient before swimming, and put on more emollient when they shower after swimming.

Sunscreens – Many sun creams will irritate the skin in children with eczema, so finding a suitable one is very much a matter of trial and error. We recommend trying out different sun creams before you go away, and trying to find one that suits all the family. Using a sunscreen factor 25 or above is recommended for children with white skin. Dark skin burns less easily and sun cream may not be needed. When putting on sun cream, remember to put on your child's emollient or steroids first, then put the sun cream on 30 mins later. Also, remember to put more sun cream on every 4 hours and after swimming.


Cool Cotton Clothing – Cotton clothing is ideal for children with eczema and does offer some protection from the sun.

Sun Safety – It is important that all the family take extra care in the sun and avoid burning.
Remember S.H.A.D.E.:

Seek the shade between 11am to 3pm
Hats on
Apply SPF 25 or above
Don't burn
Exercise Care

For further advice please contact
Nurse Consultant Dermatology Sandra Lawton
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Queen's Medical Centre
Clifton Boulevard
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Email : pils@nottinghameczema.org.uk
Website : www.nottinghameczema.org.uk

For advice on support issues please contact the NSGCCE via the website
www.nottinghameczema.org.uk and click on the contact icon  at the
top of most pages or email us at enquiry@nottinghameczema.org.uk

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