


NOTTINGHAM SUPPORT GROUP FOR CARERS OF CHILDREN WITH ECZEMA

In association with : Nottingham University Hospitals 
NHS Trust

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.

Will my Baby have Eczema? - Information for Parents

Many parents worry that their baby will have eczema, especially if they have had eczema themselves or if they already have another child with eczema. This leaflet tells you more about the risk of your baby having eczema and what you may be able to do to reduce that risk.

What is the risk that my baby will have eczema?

There is no sure way of knowing if your baby will have eczema. We do know that the risk of your baby getting eczema is much greater in families who already have eczema, asthma or hay fever, but as we do not know yet for sure which genes are linked to eczema, we cannot tell you the exact risk. There are also factors in the environment that will trigger eczema in a child who is susceptible.

As a rough guide:

- If you as parents and any other of your children do not have eczema, asthma or hay fever, there is about a 1 in 10 chance that your baby could get eczema
- If only one parent has eczema, asthma or hay fever, then there is a 1 in 4 chance that your baby could get eczema
- If both parents have eczema, asthma or hay fever, then there is a 1 in 2 chance that your baby could get eczema
- If another child has eczema, asthma or hay fever, then there is a 1 in 2 chance that your baby could get eczema.

If your child is going to get eczema, he/she is most likely to develop it in the first 2 years of life.

Things you can do which may reduce the risk of your baby getting eczema

During the pregnancy

If your new baby is at high risk of getting eczema because of your family history, there is some proof that bringing down the level of dust mites around the home may lower that risk. Also, there is some evidence that if you stop eating peanuts while you are pregnant, this may stop your child developing a peanut allergy. One study has suggested that a certain type of probiotics ('good' gut bacteria) may help to prevent eczema.

After your baby is born


Diet - There is no real proof that cow's milk will increase your baby's risk of getting eczema. Breast-feeding is best for baby for many reasons but you should not stop the baby having cow's milk if they need it. Some children with eczema are allergic to cow's milk, but this usually becomes clear in the first year of life. Giving your baby solid food early seems to increase this risk. So we advise that breast-feeding is best but please do not feel guilty if you choose not to breast-feed. If you do breast-feed, we advise you to carry on with this for at least 6 months, without giving your baby anything else, as long as the baby has regular weight checks and your diet is varied and you are drinking lots of fluids.

Weaning - Early weaning is not recommended. In babies with a high risk of getting eczema, wait until at least 6 months of age before solids are introduced if possible. The best first solids are foods that are least likely to cause allergies, e.g. baby rice, fruits such as apples and pears, and vegetables such as potato. If you would like more information on weaning, ask to talk with the children's dietitian. The link between weaning and food allergies has been studied and it is now suggested that introducing one food group at a time is better and leaving the foods that most usually cause allergies until last. So, introduce one food at a time. Give it daily for a week before you decide if it has a bad effect, e.g. skin rash, runny watery smelly poo. If you see an immediate reaction such as swelling and redness of your baby's lips and face, do not give that food and talk to your doctor before trying that food again.

website - www.nottinghameczema.org.uk

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If you are breast-feeding your baby, a vitamin and perhaps an iron supplement should also be given from when the baby is 6 months. Discuss this with your doctor or health visitor. Both you and your baby should have a good well-balanced diet and if you are restricting your diet at all, you should always ask to see a dietitian for further advice.

Skin Care - When your baby is born, it is important to keep things simple. They may have areas of dry skin just like many babies, but it is still important to avoid things that can irritate and dry the skin more, such as soaps, detergents, wool and being too hot or cold. Use a simple moisturiser like White Soft Paraffin 50%/Liquid Paraffin 50% after bathing your baby. This may protect their skin and prevent likely allergens such as house dust mite and pollen from triggering the eczema.


Environment – If you are planning to decorate your baby's room, this is a good time to reduce the levels of house dust mite that are one of the common allergens which may trigger eczema. Here are some tips:

1. Leave out soft furnishings and carpets and keep things simple.
2. Vacuum daily, when the baby is not in the room.
3. Use a cotton or plastic playmat, which can be washed easily rather than playing on the carpet. Use blinds or curtains at the window that can be washed regularly.
4. Use bedding that can be washed at high temperatures.
5. Use house dust mite covers over all the bedding.
6. Damp dust the room.
7. Wash soft toys weekly or keep only a couple of favourites ones in the bedroom.
8. Air the room well, open windows and keep the room cool.
9. Keep pets out of the bedroom.

If you already have a room furnished, please read our leaflet on reducing house dust mites. If, after following all the above advice, your baby still gets some patches of eczema, please do not feel guilty, as you may still have stopped the eczema getting even worse. Remember that 60-70% of children grow out of their eczema. Don't use creams or ointments you already have for your own eczema on your baby, as these may be too strong for your baby's skin. Ask your health visitor, nurse or doctor for advice.

For further advice please contact
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Clifton Boulevard
Nottingham
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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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