

Allergy and Immunology

STAPHYLOCOCCAL REDUCTION MEASURES FOR ECZEMA

Staphylococcus aureus and other types of bacteria commonly live on the skin in people with eczema. These bacteria can be present on skin without causing obvious signs (redness crusts) of infection but can make the eczema worse. In addition to the usual eczema management (i.e., moisturising, topical steroid creams, wet dressings) it is very difficult to remove all the bacteria and these measures are intended to reduce the number of bugs on the skin but they do not permanently remove them.

Measures which aim to reduce the bacteria on the skin need to be undertaken regularly.

Bleach Baths

Bleach contains the chemical sodium hypochlorite which can kill a number of bacteria:

- 12mls of household bleach White King (sodium hypochlorite 4.2%) in 10 litres of water which is equivalent to a quarter of a cup in a half filled standard sized bath.
- Soak in bath for 5 minutes. Bathe as usual, rinsing is not necessary
- Pat dry using old or white towels to avoid bleaching of coloured towels. Do not rub dry, as this is the same as scratching the skin.
- Immediately apply any prescribed creams/ointments, followed by moisturiser
- Repeat twice a week or as suggested by your doctor – can be used daily.

Microshield T wash (not recommended for children still in nappies)

These washes contain the antibacterial agent Triclosan at a concentration of 1%.

- Lather skin directly with Microshield T wash and leave on for 30 seconds
- Then rinse skin in bath or shower
- Pat skin dry
- Immediately apply any prescribed creams/ointments, followed by moisturiser
- Repeat daily or as suggested by your doctor

Oral antibiotics

- These may be prescribed by your doctor if there are signs of active infection.
- A swab of the infected skin may be taken prior to commencing antibiotics to confirm the type of infection and ensure the correct antibiotics have been prescribed. A course of oral antibiotics will not remove the Staph. Bacteria from the skin which is why the regular topical treatments are used as well.