

What are YOU doing about your eczema?

If you're looking for a bit of advice, information or reassurance, here is what I did about my eczema.

First things first, if you have eczema, it's your responsibility to do something about it. I had appalling eczema, until I got out of bed one morning and said to myself "enough". My skin was manageable within about 6 months. It wasn't easy but I had a lot to learn. Here are some of the things that I learnt along the way. They helped me, and different things may work for you, but here are some things to think about:

1. Have you thought about allergy tests? Could be milk, wheat, nuts, soya etc? That's the most important step. Ask your doctor for tests if your eczema is very bad, but **DO NOT** self diagnose, you could cut out a food group that you need.

2. Whilst your eczema is bad you need to do everything you cannot to irritate it further, use an organic natural washing powder (from your health food shop - don't bother with supermarket ones that say they are for sensitive skin, even they have perfume in). I use Ecover; I find it excellent.

3. **BE CAREFUL** what you use on your skin. Personally, I would not use any baby oil or Vaseline or any products with petrochemicals in, they suffocate the skin and actually dry it out even more. Obviously, do not use any artificial perfumes or fragrance at all. Try to use all organic and natural products (such as mine...). Parabens & sulphates have also been known to irritate sensitive skin.

4. If you are seeing your GP about eczema, ask for a booklet about managing it. This should give you lots of things to think about.

5. Read up as much as you can to understand it. Go to your library, get books out about it.

6. Cut your fingernails very short, as scratching with mucky fingernails will make it inflamed and sore, and possibly infected.

7. Recognise when you are stressed: try to break the cycle, go for a massage, or a run or a drink with an old friend, whatever you need to do to stop the stress...

8. Drink lots of water, room temp is best. Chamomile tea is very good. There are also some herbal teas that are good for clearing skin, with nettle or other liver clearing herbs.

9. Think about taking good quality supplements, linseed oil is good, or high strength fish oil. Go to your health food shop and ask them what they recommend, or speak to a nutritionist/naturopath. Try bellawellbeing.co.uk

10. Keep dust to a minimum, house dust mite poo makes most people's eczema worse. Damp dust otherwise you are just moving the dust around, rather than getting rid of it. Vacuum a lot or have wooden floors.

11. Get out in the fresh air. Sunshine is good for eczema in small doses, and staying cooped up in doors in either centrally heated or air conditioned environments is not good as it will dry your skin even more.

There will be times when you must use GP prescribed steroid creams to calm an infection or bad flare up, but long-term, this isn't the answer. It thins the skin, which means when eczema comes back, the skin is even less able to deal with it. Dealing with your eczema is about STOPPING it coming in the first place, instead of trying to fire fight once it's arrived.

Learn to recognise when it's on its way and do what you can to minimise it. I have overcome very painful & stressful eczema and now I'm regularly told how lovely my skin is. So believe it is possible to do something about even very bad eczema.

I make a very calming skin balm for my little girl's eczema with amongst other things, evening primrose oil, avocado oil, and organic lavender essential oil. I find if I put it on her in the evening when she's red and sore, by morning the redness is gone, and the day after, her skin is virtually back to normal. I've made it for others too, who find it very helpful. You are very welcome to try it, although I cannot promise that it will work for you. You will need to do much more than just apply a balm.

1. Organic Scratchy Balm: 50g £8.95

With shea butter, avocado oil, evening primrose oil, cocoa butter & other beautifully moisturising & healing ingredients.

2. Organic Scratchy Bath Oil: 100ml £8.95

Very simply organic sunflower & jojoba oil with a touch of calming & soothing lavender & roman chamomile essential oils.

3. Very Sensitive Face Oil: 30ml £9.95

Same as the "very indulgent face oil" (see leaflet) but with no essential oils, just very enriching & moisturising oils to rehydrate very dry & damaged facial skin.

