



## HEALTH INFORMATION

# Eczema

## What is Eczema?

**Eczema is sometimes called dermatitis which means inflammation of the skin. There are different types of eczema. The most common type is atopic eczema. In this type of eczema there is a typical pattern of skin inflammation which causes the symptoms.**

The word atopic describes people with certain allergic tendencies. However, atopic eczema is not just a simple allergic condition. People with atopic eczema have an increased chance of developing other atopic conditions, such as asthma and hay fever.

## Symptoms

- The skin usually feels dry.
- Some areas of the skin become red and inflamed.  
The most common areas affected are next to skin creases, such as the front of the elbows and wrists, backs of knees, and around the neck. However, any areas of skin may be affected.
- Inflamed skin is itchy. If you scratch a lot it may cause patches of skin to become thickened.
- Sometimes the inflamed areas of skin become blistered and weepy.
- Sometimes inflamed areas of skin become infected.

Typically, inflamed areas of skin tend to flare up from time to time, and then tend to settle down. The severity and duration of flare-ups varies from person to person, and from time to time in the same person.

## Treatment

The usual treatment consists of three parts:

- Avoiding irritants to the skin and other triggers wherever possible.
- Emollients (moisturisers) - used every day to help prevent inflammation developing.
- Topical steroids (steroid creams and ointments) - mainly used when inflammation flares up.