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Bathing and Eczema

Establishing a bathing routine that works for your skin is important for daily eczema management and care. Here is an overview of how to bathe for eczema, products to use and bathing treatment options.

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Bathing basics for eczema

How should you approach daily bathing and showering for eczema?

People with eczema, especially [atopic dermatitis](#), tend to have very dry skin in general. A skin barrier that is inflamed or dry is vulnerable to bacteria and allergens, which can make eczema symptoms worse. Taking a bath or shower is helpful for [eczema](#). It helps potential irritants. Whether you have mild or severe eczema, a regular bathing and skincare routine can strengthen your skin barrier and help you retain moisture.

If you have eczema, bathing (or showering) once per day is recommended. Here are key tips for bathing with eczema:

- Use lukewarm water, not hot water
- Use a fragrance- and dye-free, gentle cleanser for sensitive skin
- Do not rub or scrub skin with a washcloth or loofah
- Pat the skin dry with a towel
- Apply moisturizer while skin is still moist

Do you need to moisturize after bathing or showering?

Yes, if you have eczema, it's important to regularly moisturize your skin after bathing or showering. This is a key way to manage your eczema symptoms. Moisturized skin helps relieve dryness and itching, and it helps to restore the skin barrier, keeping out irritants and allergens.

Key times to moisturize include:

- After bathing
- After washing hands
- Whenever skin starts to feel itchy or dry

Be sure to choose moisturizers that are fragrance-free.

Is taking a bath or a shower better for eczema?

Both bathing and showering are equally effective in keeping the skin barrier healthy so that it can better lock in moisture and keep irritants out. However, too much contact with water or improper bathing can cause irritation. Especially if you repeatedly get your skin wet without moisturizing it immediately afterward. This can cause your skin to lose its moisture and become dry and irritated. Bathing once daily is recommended. Be sure to moisturize after taking either a bath or a shower.

[Browse skincare products for eczema](#)

What types of skincare products should I use for bathing and showering if I have eczema?

You should always look for skincare products that are fragrance-free and dye-free so that you don't further irritate your skin. Try to avoid waterless, antibacterial cleansers, which often contain ingredients like alcohol and solvents that are very hard on your skin (especially during flares). Remember not to scrub your skin while cleansing and to gently pat your skin dry when you're done. As always, moisturize your skin immediately afterward.

Related stories

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[Bleach Baths for Atopic Dermatitis — What We Believe, What We Know, What We Don't Understand](#)

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Home remedies for bathing with eczema

Are there any bathing home remedies to help eczema?

Besides following a regular bathing and skincare routine for eczema, there are some additional home remedy options that you can add to your bath to help alleviate some eczema symptoms. For example, some people with eczema add the following ingredients to an eczema bath: either baking soda, colloidal oatmeal, Epsom salt or Dead Sea salt. You should consult with your doctor before trying these. Some of these options may work for some people and not others. Oftentimes, there is little if any scientific evidence to support these home remedies.

Can you use baking soda in an eczema bath?

Adding a quarter-cup of baking soda to your bath or applying it to the skin directly by mixing it with water to form a paste, is a common treatment used to help relieve itching.

Baking soda is a mixture of sodium ions and bicarbonate ions. It dissolves fully in water. Adding baking soda to a bath may help soothe eczema symptoms due to its mild anti-inflammatory and pH-balancing properties. However, there is not much scientific evidence that baking soda can help eczema. Excessive use could potentially disrupt the skin's natural microbiome, leading to dryness or irritation.⁴

To try a baking soda bath:

- Add 1/4 cup of baking soda to a lukewarm bath
- Soak for 15 to 20 minutes
- Thoroughly rinse the body with cool water
- Follow with a gentle, fragrance-free moisturizer

Consulting a dermatologist is recommended before incorporating baking soda baths into an eczema care routine.

Can you use colloidal oatmeal in an eczema bath?

Adding colloidal oatmeal to your bath or applying it to the skin directly by mixing it with water to form a paste, is also a common treatment used to help relieve itching.

Adding 1 cup of colloidal oatmeal to a bath in a standard-sized bathtub may help soothe eczema symptoms due to its anti-inflammatory, antioxidant and skin-barrier-supporting properties. Research indicates that colloidal oatmeal contains avenanthramides, which reduce itching and irritation by inhibiting inflammatory pathways.⁵ Additionally, it helps restore the skin's natural barrier and improve hydration by acting as an emollient.⁶ A clinical study found that colloidal oatmeal baths significantly improved symptoms in people with eczema.⁷ However, while generally well-tolerated, some individuals may experience allergic reactions or irritation, particularly those with oat sensitivities. Consulting a dermatologist before use is recommended.

Can you use Epsom or Dead Sea salt in an eczema bath?

Adding 1–2 cups of Epsom or Dead Sea salt to a bath may help soothe eczema symptoms due to their antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory and skin-barrier-supporting properties. Studies suggest that bathing in salt-enriched water, such as Dead Sea salt, can improve skin hydration, reduce inflammation and enhance skin barrier function in individuals with eczema.⁸ However, salt baths can also cause stinging and discomfort, particularly on open or severely inflamed skin, potentially worsening symptoms in some individuals. Consulting a dermatologist before incorporating salt baths into an eczema care routine is recommended.

Patient and doctor responsibilities during appointments

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Dr. Peter Lio, clinical assistant professor of dermatology and pediatrics at Northwestern University, and Jim Hewlett, an eczema patient, discuss what patients and doctors can do to help make the most of doctor visits to improve eczema care.

Bathing treatments for eczema

Are there any bathing treatments recommended by healthcare providers for eczema?

There are several bathing treatments, in combination with a regular [moisturizing](#) routine, that are commonly recommended by healthcare providers for people with atopic dermatitis, the most common type of eczema. These include:

- **Soak and seal method:** This is the process of bathing, applying topical medications to affected areas and moisturizing the rest of the body

- **Wet wrap therapy:** This is the process of doing the soak and seal method, and then using damp wet cotton dressings on affected areas of the skin, along with a layer of dry dressings, for long periods of time to keep moisture in the skin ([Learn more about wet wrap therapy.](#))
 - **Bleach baths:** This is when you add small amount of household bleach to a lukewarm bath
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Downloadable Guide: Soak and Seal and Wet Wraps

Get detailed instructions on how to do the soak and seal method and wet wraps in this downloadable step-by-step guide.

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What are bleach baths for eczema?

Bleach baths can be an effective tool for managing symptoms of atopic dermatitis — the most common form of eczema. Taking a bleach bath — a bath with lukewarm water and small amount of bleach — two to three times per week may help reduce the inflammation and itch associated with atopic dermatitis. Bleach baths should only be used after consulting with a dermatologist and as part of a broader eczema management plan.

Downloadable Guide: Bleach Baths for Atopic Dermatitis

Get detailed instructions on how to take a bleach bath in this downloadable step-by-step guide.

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