



Eczema Care during Summer Months

Director's Message



Summer is finally here! Besides warm weather and vacations, the season can also bring new challenges for eczema sufferers; we often hear that sweat is a common culprit for flare-ups. The good news is that we are here to help guide you through these difficult times with education and support.

In this issue, we cover topics to help you through the warmer months, such as helpful Dos and Dont's, and sunscreen tips in our *Ask the Doctor* feature. We also share our experiences from the Spring *Life with Eczema* education series, and a heartwarming *Share your Story* profile on a family from Halifax who found their way through the trials of a new eczema diagnosis, but ultimately found the support they needed. Finally, we announce our call for applications for the ESC Research Grant Program. This exciting initiative once again invites Canadian researchers to apply for funding for projects related to the treatment of eczema.

We hope this issue brings you information and hope, and allows you to enjoy the lazy summer days as much as possible.

Wishing you continued good health,

Amanda Cresswell-Melville
Executive Director
Eczema Society of Canada

Ask the Doctor Feature

Choosing Sunscreen for Eczema



Q: *What type of sunscreen do you recommend for people with eczema?*

A: Eczema Society of Canada asked Toronto dermatologist and sun care expert Dr. Cheryl Rosen for her advice in selecting a sunscreen for the sensitive skin of eczema. "Sunscreen is an important part of a skin care regimen, protecting the skin from sun damage. Ultraviolet rays from the sun are harmful in that they cause skin cancer and make the skin look old. Additionally, for people with skin discoloration from chronic eczema, sun exposure can accentuate those unwanted skin changes." says Dr. Rosen.

Dr. Rosen offered us the following tips when selecting sunscreens: "Everyone's skin is different and so a sunscreen that feels good for one person may not for another."

Here are a few of Dr. Rosen's tips:

1. Look for sunscreens with sun protection factor (SPF) 30 or higher.
2. Look for "broad spectrum" on the label.
3. For people with sensitive skin, sunscreens with physical filters (look for zinc oxide and titanium dioxide on the label) may be less irritating than sunscreens which use organic UV filters (most widely sold sunscreens).
4. Look for sunscreens that are water resistant.
5. Spray sunscreens in an alcohol base may be more irritating than creams.
6. Although many facial moisturizers may contain sunscreen ingredients with an SPF 30 or higher, it is best to use actual sunscreens as they will usually provide greater protection.
7. It is a good idea to try a sunscreen first on a small area of skin to make sure that it is not irritating, before putting it on all areas exposed to the sun.
8. Have fun in the summer, but protect your skin as best as you can.

Dr. Cheryl Rosen is a dermatologist at Toronto Western Hospital. One of her research interests is in public education for skin cancer prevention, and she is a leading Canadian expert in sun safety. We thank Dr. Rosen for her contribution to our Ask the Doctor feature.

Life with Eczema Education Series Recap

Skincare, new treatments, and natural options were hot topics at the cross-Canada events



This past April, Canadians from coast to coast joined the Eczema Society of Canada at the Spring "Life with Eczema" Education Series. Taking place in Vancouver, Toronto and Halifax, each city welcomed a full house where patients and their family members learned about topics including managing eczema, hand eczema, natural options, and exciting new treatments coming to Canada. The latter was especially exciting for all involved.

Attendees heard from Canadian dermatologists, and each talk highlighted diligent skin care, bathing and moisturizing regimens, and the importance of treating inflammation. The controversial issue of "natural" treatments was also discussed, including confusion that surrounds the topic and the word itself. Audience members were reminded that caution needs to be taken with so called "natural treatments".

New treatments coming to Canada were also discussed. "We at the ESC are thrilled that Canadians will have access to new and varied treatments available in Canada. It has been over a decade since we've had anything new available to patients, and the fact that there will be new options for patients living with both mild to moderate and moderate to severe eczema really gives hope to all sufferers," says Amanda Cresswell-Melville, Executive Director, Eczema Society of Canada.

The Eczema Society of Canada is thankful for all who was able to join us for this series, and look forward to bringing new and exciting topics to our members. For more information on future events, visit www.eczemahelp.ca

Understanding and Avoiding Flares

Eczema Dos and Don'ts!

Eczema is a chronic skin condition marked by flares - episodes of red, itchy and aggravated skin. Preventing flares is key to achieving control. A good skin care routine and using topical medications to manage inflammation will help to keep your eczema under control.

Here is are some simple Dos and Don'ts to help identify and avoid common culprits of eczema flares.

ECZEMA DOs	ECZEMA DON'Ts
Try unscented and soap-free cleansers (check out the ESC's Seal of Acceptance products for guidance).	Overuse soaps with harsh detergents and perfumes; these are often irritating to the skin.
Give your skin a break from over-cleansing. Only use soaps when necessary.	Rely on scrubbing or exfoliating 'tools' such as rough washcloths or loofahs, which often make eczema worse.

Test any new products on a small patch of skin to ensure they are safe and non-irritating.	Forget to ask for samples! Ask to try before you buy - whether at the store or your doctor's office.
Avoid jewelry or clothing that contains potential irritants such as nickel or itchy wool.	Expose yourself to extreme temperatures (both hot and cold) - this includes hot baths and showers! Try washing with warm - not hot - water, and wearing loose-fitting clothing made of natural materials like cotton instead.
Take some time for yourself and focus on being calm and relaxed.	Stress (if you can avoid it). Seek activities that bring joy and inner peace, and share your feelings with someone you trust.
Keep your fingernails short (try carrying a cardboard nail file to manage snags on the go).	Scratch that itch! Resisting the urge to scratch can be next to impossible, but scratching can lead to broken skin, make flares worse, and lead to infection. Try applying a moisturizer or cool wet cloth instead.

A full list of approved products and more information can be found on the Eczema Society of Canada's website at www.eczemahelp.ca.

Share Your Story Feature

Never Give Up Hope: Our journey with eczema

By Jen Finlay



My name is Jen, and I'm the proud mother to my two girls, aged 2 and 5.

When both were around a year old, they started to exhibit signs of eczema. My eldest was relatively easy to manage - we would apply moisturizer to her dry patches, and they would typically go away quickly. Unfortunately, my youngest was a different story. If I had to pinpoint when it all started, it was when she was diagnosed with viral hives (these hives were red and itchy, and were likely triggered by a virus such as a cold). These hives eventually evolved into head-to-toe itchy, red skin that interrupted not only her sleep, but our whole family's as well. As you can imagine, it was difficult for her to tell us how she was feeling (she was only around 18 months at the time), so we spent our days and nights trying anything we could to make her feel better.

Our family really struggled with her eczema. We received medical advice from our family doctor, but it took a lot of trial and error to find something that worked for her. It was around this time that we found the Eczema Society of Canada. I was looking everywhere to find a way to make my daughter more comfortable, and came across the ESC's website.

She especially had a difficult time at night. Her sleep was constantly interrupted due to itching and discomfort. The ESC was a great resource for us - it provided credible tips to ease her symptoms, and worked in combination with our doctor's advice. In our toughest months, we found some relief with the use of wet wraps (i.e. applying a thick layer of cream to the body, followed by a pair of damp pyjamas, then topped with dry pyjamas and socks over each hand). However, after two and a half months of sleepless nights and raw broken skin from her constant scratching, we reached a breaking point and took our daughter to our local hospital clinic. Since we didn't have an appointment, we saw the on-call doctor, and thank goodness we did. It turns out they were familiar with eczema, and prescribed us a more potent topical steroid cream. Within a day, we saw an improvement, and within a week, her skin was no longer out of control. Since then, we diligently moisturize to prevent flares, but when they do pop up (and they still do), we treat them right away. I used to be intimidated by steroid creams, but now I know they are one of the few things that truly help my daughter.

My biggest advice to parents struggling with a child with eczema? It's not your fault. I used to feel tremendous guilt. I never had eczema myself and had to learn a lot through trial and error. These days, I feel a lot more confident in identifying my daughters' triggers (for example, cold, dry air and sweat are big culprits for us). More importantly, we are more prepared to treat flare-ups when they arise.

Our family has come a long way. When I look back, I remember a time when I would hesitate to bring my child out in public because of the scrutiny we would receive; people often thought she was contagious or worse. Now when I feel that way, I remember everything we've learned, and although this is something we are going through, it doesn't have to stop us from doing things we love. We let our kids be kids. Whether it's playing in the dirt (we just follow with a lukewarm bath and moisturizer) or visiting our local library, we know eczema doesn't have to hold us back.

Summer Fun at Camp Liberté

Children living with eczema can enjoy camp activities while also caring for their skin



Children living with eczema deserve the opportunity to enjoy the same summer camping activities as their peers. In response, Camp Liberté Society was established by a group of Dermatologists in 2009, in partnership with the Canadian Dermatology Association, and provides a summer camp experience to children living with severe atopic dermatitis (eczema).

In addition to typical camp activities, campers receive intense skin care and disease management workshops throughout the camp. While the camp addresses a variety of skin conditions, over half of the campers suffer with eczema. Eczema Society of Canada is proud to announce they have provided Camp Liberté with a grant of \$25,000. This will help support eczema campers at both the

camp for young children, held in Quebec, and the camp for pre-teens and teens, held in Alberta.

The camps are led by volunteer dermatologists and dermatology nurses. In addition to skin specific workshops, the week at camp also offers campers supervised independence where children can grow, become educated, and build confidence in their own care. Perhaps best of all, the children can participate in typical camp activities, from swimming to hiking, and join in activities that may have at one time seemed impossible for children living with severe eczema.

"Thank you for making a dream come true for so many children and especially my daughter...she had a wonderful time. She has only good memories and is still talking about it".

- Parent of Camp Liberté attendee

If you are interested in making a donation to the camp, or would like to find out how your child can attend, please contact Eczema Society of Canada at info@eczemahelp.ca or call 1-855-ECZEMA-1

Eczema Research Grant Program Open for Applications

[Apply Today!](#)



The Eczema Society of Canada (ESC) is dedicated to improving the lives of Canadians living with eczema, by providing support, education, and raising awareness. Supporting ongoing research activities is an important part of our mission.

The ESC Research Grant Program allows Canadian researchers the opportunity to apply to access funding for their research and/or eczema education projects. ESC is pleased to invite Canadian researchers, including dermatologists, paediatricians, residents, and medical and university students to apply today for this exciting funding opportunity. Applications can include research and/or educational projects that will work toward improving the lives of eczema sufferers.

The application deadline is September 30th 2017. Awards will be announced in November during Eczema Awareness Month. Every step towards research is a step toward a cure.

For more information visit [ADD LINK](#) or contact Executive Director Amanda Cresswell-Melville at director@eczemahelp.ca or 1-855-ECZEMA-1

www.eczemahelp.ca/ResearchGrantApplication

Eczema By the Numbers

Report from the American Academy of Dermatology Conference



Atopic dermatitis, the most common form of eczema, is a common skin condition, and is estimated to impact between 10-15% of Canadians. The prevalence in Canada is an estimate, as we do not have recent Canadian epidemiological data. We often have to rely to on European or US data for estimates, however some experts in Canada believe that our harsh winters and fluctuating temperatures could actually mean higher rates for Canadians.

Atopic dermatitis was among 24 skin diseases that were examined for the *Burden of Skin Disease* report by the American Academy of Dermatology that examines the prevalence and economic burdens of various skin conditions. The report used 2013 US health care claim data, and found that:

- **One in four individuals sought care for a skin disease**
- **Nearly half of patients who sought care for their atopic dermatitis were children under the age of 18**
- **Individuals living with atopic dermatitis experience substantial loss of productivity for themselves and/or their caregivers**

For more information about the American Academy of Dermatology visit www.aad.org

For more information about the Eczema Society of Canada visit www.eczemahelp.ca.

We're making a difference,
and you can help us reach our goals.

Every step toward research is a step toward a cure



We desperately need better care and more research for eczema and you can help.

Eczema Society of Canada (ESC) is furthering Canadian eczema research through our Research Grant Program. In the past year ESC has funded two university centre research projects.

Each and every one of your donations (that's 100% of private citizen donations) go directly to eczema research grants through our grant program.

All donations \$20 and greater are eligible for an official tax receipt, and no donation is too small.

Eczema Society of Canada is partnered with Canada Helps for secure online donations.

Donate now through

[Canada Helps.](#)



Together we are making a difference.

Connect

Find a support volunteer at

www.eczemahelp.ca

Eczema Help

Contact us at 1-855-Eczema-1 or email us at
info@eczemahelp.ca



Hope

*"For support and resources,
there is no finer organization
than the Eczema Society of
Canada."*

*Maryam Sanati, Editor-in-chief,
Chatelaine Magazine*