

Atopy/Eczema Complementary & Alternative Medicine

Chronic itchy, inflamed skin

Skin is very dry, red, and scaly

Scratching and rubbing lead to darkened and hardened areas of thickened skin with accentuated furrows, most commonly seen on the front of the wrist and elbows and the back of the knees

Personal or family history of allergy

QUICK REVIEW

- Food allergy is the major cause of eczema.
- Allergies to milk, eggs, and peanuts account for roughly eighty-one percent of all cases of childhood eczema.
- Omega-3 oils (fish oils and flaxseed oil) appear to offer greater treatment benefits than evening primrose oil.
- Effective treatment involves simultaneously reducing the load on the immune system by identifying and eliminating food allergies, while inhibiting the tendency to release histamine and other allergic factors in the skin.

In most cases, effective treatment involves simultaneously reducing the load on the immune system and inhibiting the tendency to release histamine and other allergic factors in the skin.

Diet

Start by eliminating all major allergens (remember, milk, eggs, and peanuts account for approximately eighty-one percent of cases). Limit animal products and add fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, herring, and halibut to the diet.

Nutritional Supplements

- Vitamin A: 5,000 IU per day
- Vitamin E (mixed tocopherols): 400 IU per day
- Zinc: 45-60 mg per day (decrease to 30 mg when condition clears)
- Flavonoids (choose one):

Quercetin: 400 mg 20 minutes before meals

Grape seed extract (95% procyanidolic oligomers content): 50-100 mg three times per day

Green tea extract (50% polyphenol content): 200-300 mg three times per day (NOTE: Liberal drinking of green tea can be used instead.)

Gingko biloba extract: 80 mg three times per day

EPA and DHA: 540 and 360 mg per day (or flaxseed oil: 1 tablespoon per day). If there is no response after three months, try evening primrose oil: 3,000 mg per day

Botanical Medicines

Choose one of the following (take dosage three times per day).

Glycyrrhiza glabra Powdered root: 1-2 g Fluid extract (1:1): 2-4 ml

Solid (dry powdered) extract (4:1): 250-500 mg

Arctium lappa or *Taraxacum officinale* Dried root: 2-8 g by infusion or decoction

Fluid extract (1:1): 4-8 ml (1-2 tsp) Tincture: alcohol-based tinctures of dandelion are not recommended because of the extremely high dosage required

Juice of fresh root: 4-8 ml (1-2 tsp)

Powdered solid extract (4:1): 250--500 mg

- *Coleus forskolli*

Extract standardized to contain 18% forskolin: 50 mg (9 mg of forskolin) two to three times per day

Topical Treatment

Choose commercial preparations that contain either glycyrrhetic acid, chamomile, or witch hazel. In addition, avoid rough-textured clothing; wash clothing with mild soaps only and rinse thoroughly; and avoid exposure to chemical irritants and any other agents that might cause skin irritation. Local application of soothing lotions ameliorates itching (zinc oxide works well), but greasy preparations should not be used for extended periods since they block the sweat ducts.