

# Wet dressings for eczema

## When to use wet dressings



- Wet dressings play an important role in the treatment of eczema
- Wet dressings should be used when your child is hot and itchy and if they wake at night due to the itch
- Your child may also need a wet dressing if there is blood on the sheets or if the eczema is still present despite treatment with cortisone ointments, moisturisers and bath oils
- Early use of wet dressings will reduce the amount of cortisone creams needed to control the eczema
- Parents and children who have used wet dressings generally express great satisfaction with the technique and many have found them to be life changing

## How wet dressings help eczema



- Wet dressings help to reduce itch by **cooling** the skin. The itch is worse when the skin is hot and inflamed
- Wet dressings help with the treatment of **infection**, as they help to clean the skin's surface
- Applying moisturiser under the wet dressings helps to **rehydrate** the skin
- Wet dressings **protect** the skin from fingernails and scratching, and help the skin to heal
- Wet dressings help to develop a good **sleep** pattern for the child and their family

## How to apply a wet dressing

### 1. Getting started



You will need:

- Bowl
- Tepid water
- Bath oil
- Cortisone or anti-inflammatory cream (if prescribed)
- Moisturiser
- Disposable towels
- Crepe bandages

### 2. Setting up



- Wash your hands
- Fold disposable towels in half
- Fill bowl with tepid water
- Add one capful of bath oil and disposable towels to bowl
- Spoon creams out onto a dry towel

### 3. Applying the creams



- Apply cortisone or anti-inflammatory creams, as prescribed, to all areas affected with eczema
- Apply moisturiser over the cortisone ointments and to the whole of the body and face

### 4. Applying the wet towels



Wrap the wet towels around the areas of eczema, using a few layers

### 5. Applying the crepe bandage



- Wrap crepe bandages around the wet towels, firmly but not tightly
- Avoid direct contact of the bandage with the skin

### 6. Applying the wet t-shirt and bandana



- Wet cool compresses can be applied to the neck as a scarf (only knot once), and a wet bandana can be applied to the head
- The scarf and bandana should be applied only under supervision and not at bedtime
- For the trunk, apply a wet T-shirt or singlet. This can be repeated as often as needed and a dry T-shirt can be applied over the top

### 7. Cool compressing



- Cool compressing is a wet dressing for the face
- Wet disposable towels in a bowl of cool water and bath oil
- Hold the towels on to the face for 5–10 minutes
- Apply moisturiser immediately after compressing
- Cool compressing should be applied as often as needed until the itch is relieved

## Important information about wet dressings



- Wet dressings are best applied at night, however they can be used during the day if the eczema is severe
- Wet dressings will dry after a few hours. Do not leave the dressings on dry (unless your child is sleeping) as dry dressings can irritate the skin by causing it to become hot, dry and itchy
- Crepe bandages used for wet dressings may be washed in the washing machine. Do not wash or reuse the disposable towels
- Do not use antiseptic bath oils in the wet dressings as these may irritate and burn your child's skin

