

A Guide to Wet Wraps

Wet wraps are a simple treatment to use when eczema is flaring, widespread or severe. They soften the skin, helping cortisone (steroid) creams to penetrate and work more efficiently. They are cooling, soothing and anti-itch.

When are wet wraps applied?

Immediately after the bath/ shower topical steroid ointments are applied to eczema areas. The wet wraps are then put on with a dry layer of clothing on top (in cool weather it is important to keep the child warm). After 20-30 minutes the wraps are removed and moisturizer applied.

Doing the wet wraps in the evening is soothing and relaxing and usually helps the child get a better night's sleep. It should be an enjoyable time, so put on a favourite TV show/ DVD or read a story. For babies, applying the wet wraps before a feed works well.

What can be used for wet wraps?

Infants – a baby grow (jump) suit is easiest. Wet the jump suit in warm water and wring out so damp but not dripping. Apply the wet suit and wrap up warmly in a towel or bunny rug for 20-30 mins. Remove the wet layer and apply moisturizer.

Older children – use warm, damp pyjamas with a dry dressing gown or track suit on top. Alternatively, Tubifast garments can be purchased for wet wraps from www.theallergyshop.com.au

Localized areas

For hands, feet or ankles use damp socks with dry socks on top. For hands, children's gloves can be used, purchased from www.theallergyshop.com.au

For elbow/ knee creases cut a face flannel into thirds and wrap the strip of damp flannel around the area. Keep in place with crepe bandage, tubigrip or cut the top off a pair of old socks. Tubifast can also be used.

The face does not usually need to be wrapped, but holding a damp flannel to the face for a few minutes is soothing if very inflamed.

Towels – this is the hospital technique and usually needs to be demonstrated.

How often should wraps be done?

Wet wraps should be done nightly until the skin clears and then every second night for one week to consolidate improvement.

Are there any problems to watch for?

If pimples start to develop it is a sign of infection. Contact your doctor for antibiotics.

Remember:

1. Bath
2. Pat dry
3. Apply cortisone ointment
4. Apply wet layer
5. Apply dry layer for 20-30 mins
6. Remove wet layer and apply moisturizer