



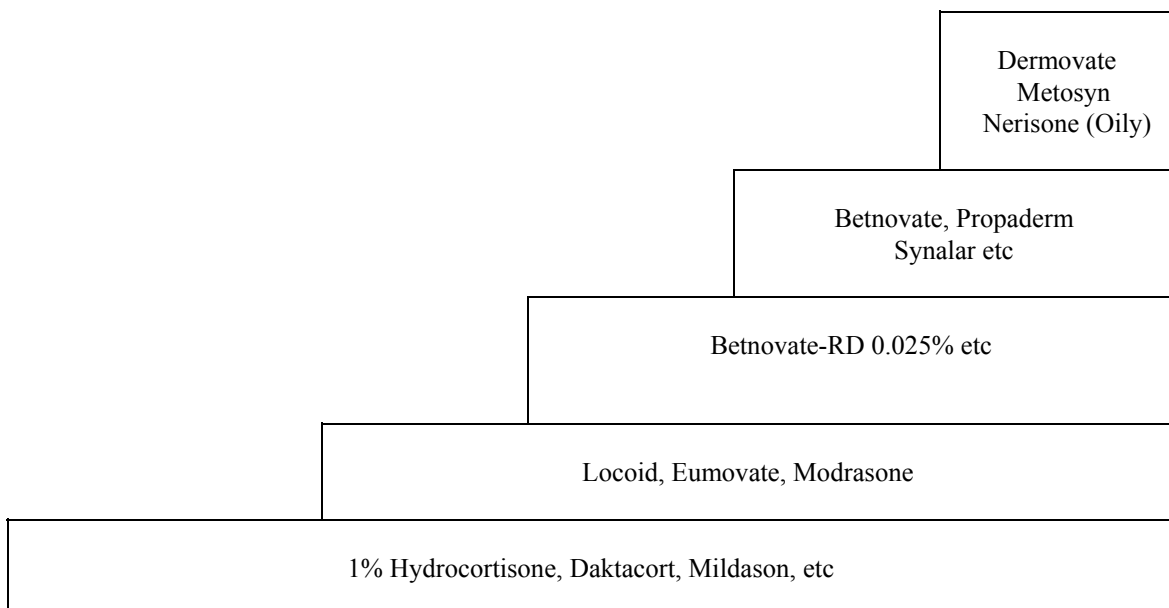
SPECIALTY: GENERAL MEDICINE - DERMATOLOGY
CLINICAL PROBLEM: ATOPIC ECZEMA IN CHILDREN

Eczema is a source of many referrals to hospital, particularly children. Approximately 15% of children develop eczema in the first five years of life and the vast majority of these can be managed in the GP surgery. **Please see separate guideline for Atopic Eczema in Adults**

MANAGEMENT OF ATOPIC ECZEMA IN CHILDREN

Mild eczema	Children with eczema do have sensitive skins. Therefore irritants should be avoided such as strong soaps and bubble baths Use bath oils Use moisturisers (after bathing) Mild topical steroid if necessary (ie 0.5% hydrocortisone ointment)
Moderate eczema - treat as for mild eczema plus:	Use soap substitutes Regular topical steroid (ie 1% hydrocortisone ointment) Combine with topical antibiotic if infected (eg Fucidin H, Vioform HC, etc) Moderately potent topical steroid if necessary Nocturnal antihistamine Referral to dietitian
Severe eczema - as above plus:	Potent topical steroid if necessary (avoid longterm facial use/flexures) Occlusion bandaging Oral antibiotics if clinically indicated Regular antihistamines

RELATIVE STEROID POTENCIES



The above steroid step ladder should also be referred to for the treatment of Psoriasis and Adult Eczema, see separate guidelines.

NB Usually use ointments not creams

REFER TO HOSPITAL FOR ATOPIC ECZEMA IN CHILDHOOD

- if their eczema is resistant to conventional therapy
- in order to exclude alternative diagnoses (such as fungal infection or scabies) or
- because the eczema has become secondarily infected, either with staphylococcal folliculitis or eczema herpeticum.
- if immunosuppressive therapy with azathioprine or cyclosporin is contemplated.
- for exclusion of allergic contact dermatitis. This is a type-IV delayed hypersensitivity reaction to contact allergens such as nickel, rubber, leather, cosmetics, medicaments and other substances which may come in contact with the skin.

MANAGING WET WRAPS IN CHILDREN WITH ATOPIC ECZEMA

‘A Guide to Wet Wraps’ by Anne Bridgman, 3rd edition, March 1999 can be used by healthcare professionals and families for technique guidance in wet wrap treatment for atopic eczema. This booklet does give advice on the correct width of Tubifast bandage to use which is important.

The child can be given a copy of ‘Kimberley Wears Wet Wraps’ by Anne Bridgman which should help to explain in simple terms what the procedure means and how it will be undertaken and relief it gives for dryness and itching.

Both booklets are sponsored by Seton and copies can be obtained from:

Patient Information Library Line (PILL)
 Chichester Health Libraries
 St. Richard’s Hospital
 Chichester PO19 4SE
 Tel: 01243 831506
 Fax: 01243 831553
 E-mail: dunhill.library@rws-tr.nhs.uk

For further advice, patients can contact: **The National Eczema Society**
 163 Eversholt Street
 London
 NW1 113U
 Tel : 020 388 4097

NB Further information may be obtained from PILL for all dermatology guidelines.

REFERENCE:

Dr Russell-Jones, FRCP. Guidelines for GP Referrals in Dermatology 1997; p16-19 and NHS NICE Guidelines 2000.

AUTHORS: Drs. Peter Coburn, Sandra Minor and Arjida Woollons, Consultant Dermatologists, Worthing & Southlands Hospitals NHS Trust

OTHERS INVOLVED: Drs. Kate Condon, Andrew Foulkes, Michael Lacey; Dr Tim Taylor, Consultant Paediatrician, Royal West Sussex NHS Trust and all LRMG Committee Members

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