If you have eczema or allergy-prone skin, you are not alone. The National Eczema Society estimates that today 1 in 5 children and 1 in 12 adults suffer from some form of eczema. The aim of this article is to offer some helpful skincare tips* and share our experience and in-depth product knowledge to ensure that you get the most from your Odylique products.*

Step 1  
Keep the skin clean

- very important for eczema-prone skin

Healthy skin flora can keep infection causing bacteria under control, but with eczema an overgrowth of Staphylococcus aureus in particular can be found (up to 90% versus 5% on normal skin). These bacteria can activate the immune system causing skin irritation and also infection. (Repair Lotion contains a herb with proven activity against this type of bacteria). Keeping fingernails short and washing hands frequently can really help. Cleanse skin using cool or warm (not hot) water and mild, non-irritating cleansers as necessary (see side panel). Dry gently.

The skin’s lipids (oils) that surround and hold skin cells together forming a protective barrier, tend to be less abundant with eczema and dermatitis. This can be due to low production by the skin cells and aggravated by harsh soap and detergents. So it is very important to avoid cleansing products that may dry and irritate the skin even more. (see below).

Step 2  
Use the power of plants – to alleviate itching and promote healing

Scratching itchy skin activates the immune system in the affected area as it causes the release of chemical trigger substances which initiate other immune reactions - hence the 'itch-scratch cycle'. The conventional approach to this problem is steroid creams which suppress the immune system. But stopping itching and inflammation with herbs such as chickweed and chamomile is kinder to the body and may offer a more long term solution. In fact, at the concentration included in our preparations, the special chamomile we use has been shown to be at least as effective at reducing inflammation as mild hydrocortisone (steroid), but without the negative side effects.

Other herbs such as calendula and aloe vera have proven powerful skin-healing capabilities. A damaged aloe vera leaf seals over quickly with a film and a rubber-like protective coating to prevent the loss of water. In a short time, the wound heals completely. The enzymes that enable this process have a similar effect in humans. Aloe vera helps foster the growth of healthy new tissue and has been shown to penetrate into the moisture-retaining lower layer of skin, helping to eradicate dead cells which not only rejuvenates the skin but also fights infection.

Step 3  
Moisturise naturally

Emollients or moisturisers are extremely important to rehydrate dry, irritated skin. By penetrating between the skin cells, a natural emollient can supplement the skin’s own lipids and support the natural barrier function in preventing moisture loss and access by infection-causing organisms. Commonly prescribed emollients such as aqueous cream, based on petroleum derivatives like paraffin wax, mineral oil and petroleum jelly tend to clog the skin pores because the molecules are too large to be absorbed. Whilst this petroleum barrier may reduce moisture loss, it also prevents the skin from breathing, secreting toxins and releasing the heat generated by inflammation. These ‘inert’ technical oils are completely devoid of nutrients, whereas plant oils are rich in vitamins A and E, so vital for the maintenance and repair of the skin.

Our products are based on organic cold-pressed botanical oils and extracts whose health promoting nutrients are readily absorbed by the skin to provide superior hydration and actively encourage the healing process. The natural antioxidants they contain also protect skin from premature ageing and combat ‘free radical’ damage caused by exposure to the elements and pollution. Applying little and often is the key, keeping the skin moisturised at all times.

TIP: Apply a little Ultra Rich to affected areas before bathing and showering – it is more efficient (and economical!) for moisturising than adding to the bathwater.

Using Repair Lotion

Margaret developed Repair Lotion during 20 years of research using her own family experience of eczema to find the most effective natural power-pack for irritated, dry and broken skin. It contains a synergistic blend of 10 skin-friendly, yet powerfully healing and soothing organic herbs in a base of vitamin-rich organic plant oils which calm, soothe and promote healing. Whilst relief can be immediate, do bear in mind that skin can take around 28 days to repair and regenerate. Smooth gently over the affected areas at least twice daily as needed.

…and Ultra Rich Balm:

Ultra Rich is a luxurious organic blend of pure plant oils, raw shea butter and Sea buckthorn for the relief of very dry or distressed skin. Completely safe for use on babies and on broken skin, it is rich in texture, rapidly absorbed and doesn’t block the pores, thus allowing the skin to breathe. Apply little and often to clean skin, either alone or on top of Repair Lotion for added moisture retention and protection. It is also suitable for applying under wet-wraps.
The Five-Step Approach to Allergy-Prone Skin

MORE TIPS:

- Apply a light layer of Ultra Rich before swimming in a chlorinated pool or the sea. Shower off and re-apply Repair Lotion and/or Ultra Rich to clean, dry skin.
- In hot weather, keep products refrigerated so they are extra cooling and soothing.
- After applying Repair Lotion to inflamed skin, leave uncovered to allow air to circulate and cool it. Avoid sun and heat exposure during a 'flare-up'.

Step 4  Avoid potential irritants
Searching for products which contain natural ingredients is a good start, but finding products without synthetic fragrances, irritant preservatives and detergents is much more difficult! Seeking out pure, skin-kind products is highly desirable for us all, as the long-term cumulative effect of putting potential irritants on the skin is believed to be a trigger for skin-sensitivity in the first place, but for those with eczema and allergy-prone skin it is absolutely crucial. While this is by no means an exhaustive list, the following substances are some of the most common culprits of skin sensitivity:

Fragrance or ‘parfum’: Synthetic fragrance (often listed on the ingredient label as ‘parfum’) is widely recognised by dermatologists as being the number one cause of adverse skin reactions to cosmetics, toiletries and laundry products. Note that ‘fragrance free’ or ‘unscented’ on a product label indicates the lack of perceptible smell, but the product may still contain fragrance chemicals.

Parabens (butylparaben, ethylparaben, methylparaben, propylparaben): These preservatives are well-known skin sensitisers, particularly to those with eczema and have also been linked to cancer. Widely used in skin care – and foods!

Methylisothiazolinone (MI):
This harsh preservative is increasingly used as an alternative to parabens in many skin care products. Following the discovery of data showing the rising incidence of contact allergy to this preservative, the EU is considering restricting its use.

Sodium lauryl sulphate (SLS): An industrial engine-degreaser found in most shampoos and bath products. It may strip out the skin's natural oils leaving it dry and irritated. Eczema-prone skin is particularly sensitive to SLS. Other common forms include sodium coco sulphate.

Step 5  Take the holistic approach

Food: Whilst topical (skin) applications can alleviate eczema a great deal, it is worth looking out for possible allergy triggers in the diet. Cow’s milk, eggs, peanuts, gluten and food additives (like flavourings, colours and sweeteners) are common culprits, particularly in children. Breastfeeding infants is widely recommended whenever possible. Keeping a food diary may also identify the cause of sudden ‘flare-ups’. Trial and error – and lots of patience – may be well rewarded!

Studies show that a common factor among atopic (hereditary) eczema is a lack of fatty acids and in particular gamma-linolenic acid (GLA). Taking a high GLA food supplement like Evening Primrose or Starflower (borage) oil may thus be a good idea. For the little ones, a pierced capsule squeezed into food is easily disguised.

Clothing: Pure cotton or silk are the best and kindest fabrics next to the skin as they are smooth, absorbent and allow the skin to ‘breathe’. Opt for light layers that can be peeled off as necessary. Protect affected areas from exposure to strong sunshine with clothing or apply a natural zinc oxide based sunscreen.

Opt for skin-friendly non-bio laundry wash, avoiding fragrances and fabric softeners. Try adding a dash of white wine vinegar to the fabric softener tray instead – it removes the last trace of washing powder, helps dissolve lime scale and leaves your laundry nice and soft.

Aloe Vera Body Wash:
For creamy bubbles in the shower or bath this really mild formula will leave your (and your little ones) skin feeling moisturised and super-soft. No SLS, fragrance or artificial preservatives.

Gentle Herb Shampoo:
Deeply conditioning and balancing for ALL hair types. With organic coconut oil, aloe vera and biodynamic herbs for easily irritated scalps. The only shampoo in the U.K. certified under organic standards! No SLS, artificial fragrance or preservatives.

*Disclaimer: No medical claim is implied or intended in relation to the products or information in this leaflet. It is intended as a helpful guide and contains suggestions based on many years of personal experience, current knowledge and research. At the moment the law requires that unless a substance or product has a medical license, no claim can be made as to its efficiency for a medical condition.

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Please contact us with any further questions you may have. We will do our best to help: 01638 491022 or info@odylique.co.uk