



THE ECZEMA DIET

It can be so hard having a child who suffers from eczema. You feel like you've tried everything and every week you buy another cream in the hope that that will be the one that will work. It can be a vicious cycle causing a lot of stress in your life as well as your child's.

Clients tell us that they've been to countless doctors and paediatricians and have spent a small fortune but haven't sustained many if any long-term results for their children. They're often told that diet has nothing to do with their situation, but Chinese medicine doesn't agree.

What you put in your mouth does have an impact on your skin. It can seem frustrating that other children may be able to eat anything and they're okay but your child is not. It can seem concerning and overwhelming when it comes to diet because there are so many different takes on it and we're sure you've tried quite a few different approaches already.

At the Red Tent clinic we put together a specific solution for you and your child – as all children are different. We look at natural food chemicals and how they are having an impact on your child as well as what kinds of food they are eating in terms of how damp, dry, hot and cool the foods are.

In scientific circles, there is a lot of debate as to whether or not food has an impact on eczema and other skin conditions. Chinese medicine votes that it has an enormous impact. And according to the Royal Prince Alfred Allergy & Food Intolerance unit, they would also argue that food affects your skin.

In this report, we are going to look at the different ways food is categorised so you have a good understanding of what to avoid in times of flare ups and what to eat during the good times. We are going to look at it from the Chinese medical point of view as well as the food intolerance point of view because in our practice, we have found that taking the best of both of these worlds is the most successful approach in reaching positive outcomes for our clients.

It's important to know that eczema is not just eczema in Chinese medicine. There is "dry" eczema, "wet" eczema, "itchy" eczema, "hot" eczema and different combinations of all of those. So whilst we are giving you overall guidelines here, it is important that your child is diagnosed properly in order to get the best outcome.

MY DAUGHTER'S ECZEMA WAS THE GREATEST STRESS IN MY LIFE.



I FELT LIKE I WAS ON A ROLLER-COASTER.



It was a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week thing. At night I wasn't sleeping. She slept next to me and if she scratched herself I knew she could hurt herself because her skin was so bad. I couldn't rest. I'd spent a small fortune on paediatricians and their creams. Nothing seemed to be working. I felt like I'd tried almost everything. People used to point and say: "What's wrong with her skin?" People used to think she'd had burns it was so bad, including doctors. Emotionally it was affecting her self-esteem. She used to hide behind me.

I was so worried about her. I started googling and came across Chinese medicine. I'd never been into natural therapies. I didn't know a lot about diet. I felt desperate. I decided to give it a go.

You have no idea what a difference it has made in our lives. Within a couple of weeks her skin was shedding and the new skin was underneath. Eliminating dairy at first I didn't understand... it didn't make sense... she wasn't allergic... I decided to trust the process. Just by eliminating the dairy and the additives and the preservatives made the biggest

difference to her skin. I followed all the advice, despite not understanding, only to come out the other side with a new child.

I'm doing this as a sole parent, so it makes it worse when you have a sick child – you don't have someone to take over in the night, so it can be really difficult.

Looking back we're in a different place now, emotionally, psychologically, physically... I'm much more relaxed. She's well now. She's healthy and she's thriving.

She's at school now and she's fine. That cream, it's the only cream that helps. "Mummy I need some of my Chinese cream." I've given a tub to the school. She's happy and she's confident. She's come out of her shell.

I'm so passionate about natural medicine now. I know what to do when her skin flares up. We look at her diet again and sure enough, I need to eliminate things that have crept back in. We do that and she's fine again. It's such a relief.

I can't thank you enough, Rebecca. I never fail to tear up when I look at the difference between then and now.

Abeda Iqbal,

Mum to Baaran (5yrs) & Erfaan Olime (3yrs)





D A M P F O O D

In many cases of eczema there is an issue with damp foods. These are foods that are “wet” and contribute to that kind of environment in the body and are highly likely to flare up eczema. They include: wheat, ice-cream and dairy products (except raw goat’s milk and yoghurt), sugar and concentrated sweeteners, fatty meat (especially pork and duck), eggs, tofu, tempeh, soy milk, lard, butter, margarine, chocolate, nuts and seeds (especially peanuts), avocados, tomatoes, tomato paste, raw and dried fruit (especially bananas and tropical fruit), salt, vinegar and beer.

Instead of consuming so many of these products, consider these instead: buckwheat, barley, rye, sourdough bread, caraway rye, pumpernickel, dry roasted oats, lettuce, celery, pumpkin, onion, shallot, garlic, turnip, watercress, adzuki bean, broad bean, radish, extra virgin olive oil, mustard, horseradish, quail, clam, lean meat, white and black pepper, clove, cardamom, nutmeg, dill seed, coriander, oregano, thyme, basil and fresh ginger. Sparingly: sweet potato, yams, kumera, potato, red and green tea.

The other main medicinal food for skin problems is soup made from free-range organic bone broth. This should be eaten regularly – ideally every day. Chicken and beef are the best. Fish is good sometimes too. Stay away from lamb or any baby animal for that matter as they are too heating and will make skin conditions redder, hotter and more irritated. The bone broth can go into food you are cooking, for example, mashed potato, a rice or pasta dish as part of the sauce, in any sauce you are making or in scrambled eggs. Whenever you need a bit of liquid, use bone broth as stock – it will add flavour and oh so much nutrition for the skin.



THERMOGENIC PROPERTIES OF FOODS

When their eczema is flared up and red, steer clear of hot food and favour all the rest. Having said that, it's important to continue to steer clear of overly damp food during a flare up. So whilst a banana may be cooling, it is also damp, so stay clear of it.

	COLD	COOL	NEUTRAL	WARM	HOT	
VEGETABLES	Bean sprout Chinese cabbage Seaweed Snow peas Water chestnut White mushroom	Alfalfa sprout Asparagus Bamboo shoot Beet Bok choy Broccoli Button mushroom Cabbage Carrot Cauliflower Celery Corn Cucumber Eggplant	Endive Lettuce Potato Pumpkin Soy bean sprout Spinach Summer squash Turnip Watercress Winter melon Winter squash Zucchini	Chard Shiitake mushroom Sweet potato Taro root Yam	Bell pepper Chinese chive Green bean Green onion Kale Leek Mustard Parsley Parsnip	Chili Garlic Ginger Scallion
FRUIT	Banana Cantaloupe Grapefruit Pear Watermelon	Apple Apricot Fig Lemon Orange	Peach Persimmon Strawberry Tomato	Chinese date Mango Olive Papaya	Cherry Coconut Dried papaya Grape Lychee Pineapple Plum Raspberry Tangerine	
GRAINS		Millet Pearl barley White rice Wheat	Brown rice Buckwheat Corn meal Rice bran Rye	Oats Sweet rice Wheat bran Wheatgerm		
SEEDS, BEANS	Pumpkin seed	Mung bean Soy bean Tofu Winter melon seed	Almond Black sesame seed Kidney bean Pea Peanut Sunflower seed	Black bean Brown sesame seed Chestnut Lentil Pine nut Walnut		
ANIMAL PRODUCTS	Pork	Chick egg Clam Crab	Dairy products Fish (ocean) Gelatin Oyster	Beef Chicken Fish (freshwater) Shrimp Turkey	Lamb	
MISC.	Salt Vitamin C White sugar	Tea	Barley malt Black fungus Honey Rice malt White fungus	Brown sugar Coffee Molasses Rice vinegar Wine		



FOOD INTOLERANCE

Naturally occurring food chemicals can present problems for your child's body and it's important to understand that so you can avoid them in times of skin flare ups. They are called amines, salicylates and monosodium glutamate (MSG). They make food taste good – the tastier something is, the more it has of all of those chemicals. When children are little they tend to favour bland food as that's what their body can handle and it's best to mainly stick with that until they get older. From seven years and onwards they will be able to handle more food experimentation. Natural chemicals found in many "healthy" foods can be just as much of a problem for sensitive people as the artificial ones found in food additives. This kind of information can come as quite a surprise as many people find out that the food they are eating that they thought was healthy is actually causing them harm.

We like to think of this diet as a holiday for the body. Ensuring that you aren't stressing it out by overloading it with lots of food chemicals means it has a greater chance to heal itself and become stronger.

So in times of eczema flare ups we suggest eating food mainly from the low and moderate columns. Again though, it's important to remember the information about damp food. So whilst most dairy products are found in the low column here, looking through the Chinese medicine lens, it is very damp and so should be avoided.

AMINES

come from protein breakdown or fermentation. Levels increase as fruit ripens or as leftovers remain leftovers for a longer period.

a

SALICYLATES

are natural plant chemicals. Levels are highest in unripe fruit.

s

MSG

Monosodium Glutamate is an amino acid which is a building block of all proteins. It's naturally present in most foods.

g



FOOD INTOLERANCE

FOOD CHEMICAL TABLES

	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
VEGETABLES	Bamboo shoots Brussels sprouts Cabbage Celery Chives Choko Dried beans Leeks Lentils Lettuce (iceburg) Mungbean sprouts Parsley Potato (white peeled) Red cabbage Shallots Swede (rutabaga)	Asparagus Beetroot Carrot Chinese vegetables Lettuce (other) Marrow Parsnip Pumpkin (butternut/squash) Snow peas (mangetout) Snow pea sprouts Sweet potato Turnip Green peas	Alfalfa Artichoke Capsicum Chili Chicory Corn Cucumber Onion Pumpkin (other) Radish Water chestnut Watercress Witlof (chicory/Belgian endive) Zucchini (courgette)	Avocado Broad bean Cauliflower Eggplant Gherkin Olive Broccoli Champignon English spinach Mushroom Silverbeet Tomato
FRUIT	Pear (ripe, peeled)	Apple (golden, red delicious) Custard apple Loquat Pear (unripe, peeled) Persimmon Rhubarb Tamarillo Banana Papaya Paw paw	Apple (Jonathan, Granny Smith) Apricot Berries Blackcurrant Cherry Guava Lychee Nectarine Peach Pomegranate Redcurrant Rockmelon (cantaloupe) Strawberry Fig Lemons Sugar banana	Avocado Date Grapefruit Kiwi fruit Mandarin Orange Passionfruit Pineapple Raspberry Tangelo Grape Plum Prune Raisin Sultana Tomato
ANIMAL PRODUCTS	Beef Chicken (no skin) Eggs Fish (fresh, white) Lamb Rabbit Veal		Aged meat Bacon Chicken liver Chicken skin Frozen fish Gravy – meat juice Ham Pork Salmon Sardines Tuna	Anchovies Fish roe Fish – dried, pickled, salted, smoked Offal Smoked meat and chicken Tuna (canned) Meat pies Processed luncheon meat Salami Sausages Seasoned meats and chicken

KEY:

AMINES

SALICYLATES

MSG MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE



FOOD INTOLERANCE

FOOD CHEMICAL TABLES

	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
DAIRY & SOY	Cream Fresh cheese (eg ricotta) Milk (cow, goat) Plain whole-milk yoghurt Soy drink Soy yoghurt Tofu		a Mild cheese	s a Tasty cheeses (all) g a Miso g a Soy sauce g a Tempeh
DRINKS	Carob powder Milk (cow, goat) Soy drink Sparking clear (lemonade, lime soda, unpreserved) Rice drink Coffee (decaffeinated) Gin Vodka Whisky	s Coffee s Coffee substitutes s Tea (decaffeinated; herbal, except peppermint) s Tea substitutes	s Fruit juices (all)	s Fruit flavoured drinks a Cocoa powder a Chocolate flavoured drinks s a Cordials/fruit mixes s a Cola drinks s a Orange juice s a Soft drinks/sodas g s a Tomato juice g s a Vegetable juice s Tea s Peppermint tea s a Beer s a Cider g s a Brandy, Port, Rum, Sherry g s a Liqueurs g s a Wine
SWEETS	Caramels Carob Golden syrup Malt extract Marshmallow (white) Maple syrup Rice syrup Sugar Toffee	s Molasses s Raw sugar		s Chewing gum s Honey s Jams (all) s Liquorice s Mint-flavoured sweets s Peppermints a Chocolate (all) a Cocoa s a Fruit-flavoured sweets and ices s a Lemon butter (curd)
PACKAGED SNACK FOODS	Cashews (raw) Plain potato crisps (chips)	s Corn crisps (chips) s Tacos	s a Coconut s a Peanuts & all other nuts s a Sesame seeds s a Sunflower seeds	s Honey flavours g s Spicy flavours a Almonds a Fruit flavours a Muesli bars g s a Cheese flavours

KEY:

a AMINES

s SALICYLATES

g MSG MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE



FOOD INTOLERANCE

FOOD CHEMICAL TABLES

	LOW	MODERATE	HIGH	VERY HIGH
FLOURS	Arrowroot Barley Buckwheat Cornflour (cornstarch) Malt Rice Rice cereals (plain) Rice flour Rolled oats Sago Soy flour Rye flour Wheat Wheat cereals (plain) Wheat flour		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s Corn cereals s Cornmeal s Polenta s Breakfast cereals with honey a Breakfast cereals with cocoa s a Breakfast cereals with fruit, nuts and coconut 	
OILS	Butter Ghee Margarine (unpreserved, no antioxidant) Sunflower oil (no antioxidant) Safflower oil (no antioxidant) Canola oil (no antioxidant) Soy oil (no antioxidant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s Almond oil s Corn oil s Peanut oil 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s a Coconut oil s a Copha s a Olive oil s a Sesame oil s a Walnut oil
ADDITIVES	Chives (as a garnish) Garlic Parsley (as a garnish) Poppy seeds Saffron Sea salt Spring onions (scallions) Vanilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Malt vinegar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> s All other herbs and spices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> g a Hydrolysed vegetable protein g a Meat extracts g a Soy paste g a Soy sauce s a Tandoori s a Vinegar (cider, red & white) g s a Gravies g s a Pastes (fish, meat, tomato) g s a Sauces (all) g s a Stock cubes g s a Tomato sauce g s a Yeast extracts

KEY:

a AMINES

s SALICYLATES

g MSG MONOSODIUM GLUTAMATE



A FEW MORE TIPS TO HELP MINIMISE

HOT, ITCHY, DRY SKIN

* Remove heat and humidity where possible as they cause perspiration which makes itchy skin worse.

* Avoid exposing the skin to irritants like latex.

* Use a humidifier at night if skin is very dry. However, if skin is very wet and there is phlegm, you may consider a dehumidifier.

* Bathe in warm water, not hot. Use a mild soap such as goat's milk soap or try rolled oats in the end of a stocking – squeeze the slime over the affected areas and let dry a little then wash off. Regular soap will dry their skin out.

* Wear cotton clothes with long sleeves and long pants.

* Avoid wool and feathers in clothing and bedding as they contain dust mites and the dust mite poo can be irritating to skin and nasal passages causing the body to make phlegm.

* Allergy-proof the home.

* Dress appropriately for climatic conditions.

* Prevent infection by preventing scratching.

* Maintain personal hygiene.

Avoid bubble baths and other bath chemicals.

Ensure they have adequate amounts of Vitamin C and E as well as Zinc, Evening Primrose Oil and Fish oil.

* Avoid food additives and colourings.

* Ensure little fingernails are kept short and pop cotton gloves on them at night time to avoid scratching and breaking the skin.

* Don't let your child overheat, particularly in bed or in the car.

* After a bath or shower just pat dry as rubbing can be too harsh on their skin.

* Relieve stress.

* Avoid contact with pets.

* Avoid people with skin infections.

Avoid external stimulation from weather extremes such as wind, hot sun, cold etc.

Moisturise with chickweed, paw paw or licorice cream.

Check your laundry soap as they can leave residue in clothes that can be irritating. Ensure you use a natural one and rinse well.



CHICKEN STOCK

RECIPE

2-3 chicken carcasses (preferably free range or organic), washed. (You can use your leftover carcass from a roast chicken or you can use a bunch of chicken legs. The more chicken you use, the richer the stock is.)

4 sticks of celery, washed and cut into pieces

2 brown onions, with skin left on, washed and cut

2 carrots, with skin and ends intact, washed and cut

4 Tbsp apple cider vinegar (to help bring out calcium and other minerals)

Sea salt to taste (add this at the end)

Water - fill a large stockpot or your slow cooker almost to the top

This is the base ingredients list. You may wish to add herbs for more flavour depending on what the stock is going to be used for. Additions can include things like bay leaves, marjoram, parsley or peppercorns – however, when making a stock for your toddler just stick with the ingredients above and nothing more. Whatever you do though, make sure you don't add salt until the end, otherwise all the goodness from the bones and vegetables will leach into the water.

1 Place your chicken into a pot. Cover it with water, bring it to the boil and then discard the water and replace with fresh water. This cleans the chicken and you won't need to skim the scum from the stock later on.

2 Place all ingredients in the stockpot and fill with water to 4/5 of pot capacity. Bring to the boil and then simmer for two hours or more; the longer you simmer the richer it becomes. If you have a slow cooker, use that and do it for 10 hours. Once it's finished, add salt to taste. If you've been simmering for a long time though, chances are you won't need any salt.

3 When complete, leave to cool, strain (for fat) through a sieve using muslin cloth and store in containers for refrigeration or freezing.

*** Sunday** – This is the day you could cook up your stock as you'll likely have more time and it can keep in smaller batches to be used during the week. Use chicken or beef (lamb is too heating for little kids).

