

Rub-A-Dub-Dub! Spend Time in the Tub!
Bathing in warm water relieves eczema dryness



MONTREAL, April 3, 2006 — Soaking in a hot bath may soothe the psyche, but what will it do to your skin? “It’s a common perception that bathing strips away the natural oils that moisturize the skin,” says Dr. Maha Haroun, one of a number of Canadian dermatologists helping to promote better disease management through the Eczema Awareness, Support and Education (EASE) program. “While it is true that long, steamy baths can dehydrate the skin, frequent short baths in warm water can have a beneficial effect, especially when immediately followed by a moisturizer.”

Bathing helps the skin retain moisture and is an important ritual all year long for children and adults who suffer from sensitive skin conditions like eczema. In eczema, the protective layer of the skin has lost its ability to retain moisture and as a result, eczema sufferers can experience itching, burning, stinging and a feeling of tightness.

“Bathing in warm (not hot) water for 10 minutes daily will cleanse and hydrate the skin,” says Dr. Haroun, Assistant Professor of Medicine at the University of Toronto, “and adding emulsifying bath oil to the water will also help to rehydrate and nourish the skin.”

It’s also important to treat the skin gently, since the use of some soaps and harsh skin cleansers can cause the skin to lose its ability to retain moisture. “Try to avoid exposure to harsh soaps, and other drying agents such as powders,” says Dr. Haroun. Mild soap-free cleansers, preferably liquid, are the best choice for those with eczema. These cleansers will gently remove dirt, excess oil, bacteria and cosmetics without stripping natural oils from the skin’s outer layer.

Moisturizers play an important role in helping to restore the skin’s protective barrier by filling in holes and gaps in the skin’s outer layer. Good-quality moisturizers contain both occlusive ingredients (which prevent the evaporation of moisture) and humectant ingredients (which attract water from the deeper layers of the skin to its surface). “Be sure to use moisturizers twice daily, ideally within 3 minutes of patting skin dry after the bath and while the skin is still damp,” says Dr. Haroun.

When water is allowed to evaporate through the skin, it is called transepidermal water loss. Water originates in the deeper epidermal layers and moves upward to hydrate cells in the stratum corneum (the outermost layer of the skin). It is eventually lost to evaporation. When moisturizers are applied to damp skin within 3 minutes after bathing, a protective barrier is formed, transepidermal water loss is reduced, and the skin can retain more water.

The Eczema Awareness Support and Education (EASE) program was developed in collaboration with leading Canadian dermatologists to meet the need for comprehensive, bilingual and non-commercial information on eczema. Clinical experience has shown that a large number of eczema patients experienced difficulty and frustration in managing this life-altering condition, which is chronic and chronically recurring. As a result, patients often do not comply with medical treatment. One of the goals of EASE is to help sufferers, many of whom are children, and their families to better understand the chronic nature of this disease, its triggers, treatment options and psycho-social issues. Winner of the Canadian Dermatology Association’s (CDA) Public Education Award in 2003, 2004 and 2005, EASE provides free educational resources such as booklets, pamphlets, a website (www.eczemacanada.ca) and a regular newsletter. In addition to English and French certain material is also available in Mandarin.



Press Release

The EASE program is made possible through an unrestricted educational grant from Astellas Pharma Canada, Inc., a research-based pharmaceutical company based in Markham, Ontario. To learn more about eczema, call 1 866 432-0362 or visit www.eczemaCanada.ca.

If You Have Eczema, Remember These 10 Bathing Tips:

1. The water temperature should be lukewarm
2. Long hot showers or baths are not recommended
3. Soaps tend to remove oils that are needed in the skin
4. Perfumed products should be avoided – especially bubble bath
5. Shampoos should be rinsed off in a way that avoids skin contact
6. Emollient bath oils are beneficial
7. Bath oils should be added towards the end of the bathing session so as not to coat the skin and prevent hydration
8. The skin should be gently patted dry with a soft towel
9. Moisturizers should be applied to moist skin within 3 minutes after bathing in order to lock water into the skin
10. Don't forget your rubber duck to make bath time as much fun as possible!

For more information and to book interviews contact:

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