5-Step Hydration Protocol - for eczema and dry skin

This 5-step protocol was designed to be as simple as possible to promote compliance and cost-effectiveness. If strictly followed in exact order, you will see rapid and remarkable results. Any deviation may reduce success.

Dr Rao recommends:

**Step 1.** Daily baths, in lukewarm water, each bath lasting at least 10 minutes in length.

- Baths allow water to slowly soak into the skin and gently hydrate the soft tissues.
- Avoid showering. Showering does not allow water to enter the skin efficiently. Showers also traumatize the skin by the force of the water hitting the skin surface.
- Water that is too hot or too cold will irritate the skin, and should be avoided.

**Step 2.** Do **NOT** add anything else to the bath - only water

- Oils, bubble solutions, fragrances, Aveeno or anything else will only serve to coat the skin and impair the entry of water, which is absolutely necessary to treat the dryness.

**Step 3.** Do **NOT** use soap

- Soap can be very drying and harsh on the skin. Contrary to popular belief, soap is not a necessary bathing agent. The only areas that really require cleansing agents are the armpits, groin, buttocks, and hair, as these sites are strong sources of oils and odors. For the rest of the skin, water alone will do.
- To clean the armpits, groin and buttocks, use a gentle, unscented cleanser (such as Cetaphil® or Dove®) only to these sites, and only towards the end of the bath. If this is done too early, the cleanser residue will coat the skin and impair hydration.
- To clean the hair, use a gentle shampoo (such as Johnson&Johnson® Baby Shampoo) only to the hair, and only at the end of the bath. If shampoo is used too early, it will prevent water from entering the skin by coating the skin surface.
- Do **not** scrub, as this will irritate the skin. Only brief skin contact and gentle cleansing is required.

**Step 4.** Dry the skin by gentle patting with a cotton towel - do **NOT** wipe the skin dry.

- “Pat drying” gently removes excess surface water, without traumatizing the skin. It allows the skin to remain slightly moist for the next important step, which will trap the moisture into the skin.

**Step 5.** **Immediately** apply a moisturizer to all dry areas of the skin.

- This is the most important step of the Protocol. Within 2 minutes of “pat drying” the skin, it is crucial that a bland moisturizer be applied to all areas that are prone to dryness. The moisturizer acts as a sealant to “lock in” the moisture obtained from the bath. If this step is not done, the moisture within the skin will quickly evaporate, often making the skin even drier! In the past, doctors would advocate bathing every couple of days because frequent baths caused dryness - this is true if this moisturization step is not performed. Remember, the sooner the moisturizer is applied after bathing, all the more will the skin be hydrated.
- Examples of bland, non-irritating moisturizers include Glaxal Base® and Cetaphil® moisturizer, which are both good for warmer weather, and Vaseline® petroleum jelly which is ideal for colder months of the year. Do not use coconut oils or other natural remedies that may contain natural allergens. Remember many kids with eczema have nut allergies and sensitivities.

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