

## MY SIX MONTH OLD HAS PATCHES OF ECZEMA, IS THERE ANYTHING I CAN DO TO HELP

*Charlotte Vohtz, founder of Green People, says:* “The good news is your baby’s dry skin or eczema can be successfully managed and controlled at home. Eczema is likely to be a result of a combination of genetic and environmental factors. The impaired skin barrier means that irritants and allergens in everyday life can easily cause flare-ups.

By avoiding certain irritants, you can promote the conditions needed for a healthy skin barrier. Along with allergies to food, pet dander and dust mites, skin care products are one of the most common triggers for eczema. Always avoid:

- SLS (sodium lauryl sulfate) – a cheap foaming agent often found in washes and bubble baths, strips the skin of natural oils.
- Petrochemicals like mineral oil and silicones – found in many baby products, prevent the skin from breathing.
- Alcohol (ethyl alcohol/ethanol) – a common ingredient in many skin care products, dissolves protective skin oils.
- Biological detergent – Avoid using enzyme-based washing powders and liquids as these can aggravate eczema.
- Synthetic perfume – a common cause of skin sensitivity and allergic reactions.
- Synthetic colourants and certain preservatives – such as methylparaben or butylparaben can cause skin irritation.

Try to:

- Moisturise all over – Dry baby thoroughly, especially in skin creases such as the groin, taking care not to drag the skin. Then apply a suitable moisturiser all over the body, not just on affected areas. Repeat several times a day.
- Avoid wet wipes – Use cotton wool and water to cleanse the nappy area, then apply a nappy rash cream suitable for children with skin conditions, such as Organic Babies Calming Nappy Cream.
- Choose cotton clothing – Avoid wool and synthetic fabrics. At night choose cotton pyjamas and use cotton mitts to prevent baby from scratching.
- Keep bedrooms cool – Dress baby appropriately but keep bedrooms at around 19°C to prevent skin from drying out.
- Consider using a humidifier – Adding moisture to the air will help to combat dry skin.”

## MY FRIEND’S NINE MONTH OLD RECENTLY SUFFERED A FEBRILE CONVULSION, WHAT IS IT AND ARE THEY COMMON?

*Emma Hammett, founder of First Aid For Life, says:* “Febrile convulsions are fits or seizures

triggered by a rise in a child’s core body temperature when they are unwell, and are common in little ones. In fact, as many as one in 20 children may experience a febrile convulsion by the time they are five.

They most frequently occur between six months and five years old, and are quite terrifying to watch, but are not usually life threatening and your child is likely to grow out of them. Genetics increase the likelihood, too, and if one or both parents experienced seizures as children, it is far more likely that their child will suffer from them as well.

If your child does have a seizure, there are things you can do to help. Firstly, if your child has been unwell, try to lower their temperature. Take off excess clothing, give them plenty to drink, and give them paediatric paracetamol (such as Calpol) to relieve symptoms.

A fit is generally not life threatening – however, if the seizure continues for more than five minutes or they have repeated seizures then it is vital to call an ambulance. The fit can last from seconds to minutes, and they may go blue and stop breathing. Once the fitting stops, they should be rolled into the recovery position on their left side, to keep their airways open. They may be confused and fractious following the convulsion; be calm, they will return to their normal selves. Following a first fit, they are usually admitted to hospital for observation and tests.”

## HOW DO I STOP MY NINE MONTH OLD DAUGHTER FROM ALWAYS WANTING TO SLEEP IN MY BED?

*Kathryn Mewes, sleep consultant and parenting expert for Milton, says:* “There’s light at the end of the tunnel! I have been guiding children to sleep for more than 20 years and if you can remain consistent and leave your baby to settle herself, you should be able to resolve this in three consecutive nights. Make sure you have someone to support you and that you feel ready to make the change. You need to feel strong enough in yourself to see this through for three nights.

It’s not an easy process as your baby does need to be left to ‘shout it out’. This is hard to listen to but I don’t believe there is any other way with a child of nine months. Your daughter is now fully aware of the routine you have of allowing her to come into your room, so breaking this is not going to be easy. I would suggest you try the following:

- Ensure your baby’s bedroom is dark. If you haven’t got a blackout blind you can try sprinkling water on the glass and lining the windows with tin foil.
- Make sure the bedroom is warm and cosy and that she is not able to climb out from her cot.
- Give a clear bedtime routine that involves milk, a bath and a story before being placed in her cot while she is still awake.
- Leave the room and accept that she is going to shout. At first your baby will be shouting for you. Your baby will then accept that she needs to settle alone and will shout due to not quite knowing how to do it.

Listen for the pauses rather than the shouting. For as long as there are pauses, she is thinking about how to settle. Do not enter the room as you are likely to disturb her trying to settle. The more you go into the room, the more frustrated she will become. She is shouting because she wants to sleep, not because she needs you!”

SOURCES: FACTRETRIEVER.COM; EMMA’S DIARY; BOOTSWEBMD.COM