

Wet Wraps

Wet wraps can be a useful tool in the intensive treatment of atopic dermatitis. They serve as an effective barrier to scratching and increase skin hydration and rehydration, which, in turn, helps promote more restful sleep. Likewise, they act as an occlusive barrier that promotes penetration of topical corticosteroids into the skin, thereby increasing the amount of medication delivered to the affected areas of inflammation.

Wet wraps should be reserved for severe flares and used only for a few days at a time because they are time consuming. If overused, skin breakdown can occur, and if emollients are not used properly under the wraps skin dryness can actually be increased.

1. Gather your supplies.

- Topical steroid ointment and/or emollient prescribed by your physician.
- Warm water in a sink or a basin.
- The wraps themselves consist of a bottom (wet) and top (dry) layer. Gauze wrap or cotton sleepers, pajamas, or long johns may be used. Some places are even starting to sell wet wraps for children. You can go to the following website to gather more information.

Wrap E Soothe Suit ages 6 months- 3 years

<http://www.amazon.com/Wrap-E-Soothe-Suit-12-18-months/dp/B00GXD2DJ4>

Whatever you chose to use, it will be necessary to have 2 layers; one for the "wet" layer and one for the "dry" layer.

2. Apply the steroid ointment to the patient's inflamed skin as directed by your physician.

3. Using tongue depressors or popsicle sticks (similar to how a spatula is used in cooking) helps you to avoid contaminating the medication supply with your hands, allows large areas to be covered quickly and evenly, and prevents the caregiver from being unnecessarily exposed to topical corticosteroids.

4. Apply emollient to the rest of the child's skin as directed by your physician.

5. Take the article of clothing you are using as the wet wrap and soak it in warm water.

6. Wring out any excess water until this bottom "wet layer" is only very slightly damp.

7. Wrap the affected area with the "wet layer" material. Make sure the "wet layer" is not too tight that it affects the patient's circulation.

8. Immediately put the "dry layer" over the "wet layer." Do NOT cover with plastic, which may be a choking hazard.

9. Make sure the child remains in a warm environment. (This helps to promote a higher degree of humidity. It also ensures that the child does not get too cold as the evaporation process happens.)

10. Wet wraps are generally left on for 2-3 hours at a time. If you notice the "wet layer" is starting to dry out in that time frame, you might need to get a spray bottle to wet the layer some more.

