

## **BLEACH BATHS**

- Bleach baths are helpful in the management of eczema, both to treat flares and especially in cases of frequent or recurrent infection. They can also help to reduce recurrences of eczema.
- Bleach baths reduce bacterial colonisation and are also active against fungi and viruses. They are helpful even if colonised or infected with resistant bacteria.
- Use of bleach baths has significantly reduced the need for oral and topical antibiotics.
- They also seem to have anti-inflammatory properties and help to control eczema which is not obviously infected.
- Bleach baths for eczema have a similar concentration of bleach as a swimming pool.

### Instructions

- Use warm but not hot water.
- The first time, fill the bath with a bucket (a full bucket is 10 litres). Count how many buckets of water are needed.
- Use unscented White King (4%) bleach : 12 mls for each bucket of water.
- You can add PLAIN dispersible bath oil (NOT the flare up type). This is optional, but helps to manage dryness of the skin associated with eczema.. For the amount to be used, follow the instructions on the bottle.
- Soak in the bath for 10-15 minutes. If eczema involves the head or neck, gently wash these areas too. Take care to avoid the eyes.
- Do not rinse off after the bath. Pat the skin dry with a clean towel and apply moisturizer to the whole skin surface immediately.
- The next time the bleach bath will take less time to prepare as you will know how much bleach to add for the volume of water in the bath.

### Frequency

- Daily for a month
- Three times per week for a month
- Weekly for a month
- Increase the frequency if the eczema flares
- The effect is temporary so bleach baths need to be continued.
- A visit to a swimming pool can be substituted for a bath.

Bleach baths are safe when performed as instructed. Rarely they can aggravate dryness of the skin and cause irritation. If this occurs, add plain dispersible bath oil or reduce the concentration of bleach (8-10mls).

Keep bleach out of reach of children, and always use a container with a childproof lid.