



*Supporting Health
& Wellness*
with
Melissa Raymond

Soothing Eczema: Low Chemical Guide

Hello!

My name is Melissa and amongst many things, I'm a mum to two beautiful boys. I'm also a physiotherapist with a PhD and have spent the last 7 years looking for ways to help my son with his eczema and allergies. I've read and critically analysed the research into causes and treatment of eczema and allergies, and used naturopathy and homeopathy to help us along the way.

Our little one developed eczema when he was quite young. I felt so helpless watching him scratch and itch in complete discomfort, with sleepless nights, high risk of skin infection, mittens 24/7, and nothing that we were doing to make it go away for longer than the steroids would last.

I hated the thought of bleach baths. I hated having to apply steroids to him daily, and moisturize him in petroleum-based 'eczema' creams, and I struggled feeling so helpless.

People have asked me over the years what we did to help him with his eczema and allergies. We made a number of lifestyle changes – dietary, cutting his chemical exposure, physical activity and using natural options to support his health. These changes have made the greatest difference in the health of his skin.

I'm so happy to be able to share this guide with you – to save you the years of heartache, itching and scratching, and point you in the right direction to better skin, better sleep, and better health.

If you're wanting to replace your products, making your own can be really easy. If you don't feel you're ready or have the time to do this (yet), there are more options on the market these days: health food shops often have a large range of more natural products – but make sure you still read the label before you purchase!

I hope you enjoy this Guide which will take you through some of the chemicals that I identified and removed or replaced.

Warmest regards

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Chemicals	
Skin care	<p>Your skin is the largest organ in your body and absorbs so much of what we put on it.</p> <p>Women typically are in contact with over 100 different chemicals every single day.</p> <p>Moisturisers, cleansers, toners, make up (lipstick, primer, foundation, eye shadows, mascara), shampoo, conditioners, nail polish, perfumes, soaps, spray tans to name a few.... All contain multiple different chemicals, often not tested for safety in humans; some of these are not recommended for exposure in large amounts. These chemicals can accumulate in your body (often in your adipose tissues) and have been found in the breastmilk of new mums...eek!</p> <p>Moisturisers, even the ones specifically for eczema, usually contain a myriad of chemicals that are listed as carcinogens, skin irritants, or otherwise toxic to the skin; these chemicals can be stored in your adipose tissues.</p> <p>Making your own moisturiser at home is easy and add pure essential oils to help soothe the skin and minimize risk of infections.</p> <p>Skin exfoliators (best not applied to eczematous skin) can be easily made up with natural ingredients: raw honey, fine sugar or salt, coconut or olive oil, and some pure essential oils make up a super easy and delicious scrub.</p>
Perfume	<p>Perfumes contain many ingredients that aren't listed on the label: these are often considered 'trade secrets'. Chemicals typically include formaldehydes, coumarin, isoeugenol, estragole, acetaldehyde, which are all associated with increased risk of cancers in animals (not tested on humans!). As well as synthetics, these ingredients may flare up eczema by increasing the toxic load on your body as well as being irritating to the skin. Avoid!</p> <p>If you'd still like to smell nice, a quick and beautifully personalized perfume can easily be made with pure essential oils and a carrier oil.</p>
Cleaning products	<p>Most cleaning products do not list the ingredients on the bottle, and recommended to use gloves, applied in well-ventilated spaces, and not for ingestion. This indicates that they are toxic and not to use around kids. Vinegar, bicarbonate of soda and essential oils do the trick just as</p>



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well, are cheaper to make and much less harmful to you and the environment.

Less toxic chemicals in your house that you're breathing in and being exposed to can only be a good thing!

Washing powders	Store-bought washing powders contain various chemicals and often synthetic fragrances which can irritate the skin . Wearing clothes washed in this, as well as bedsheets/towels/blankets, expose the skin to these chemicals 24 hours a day . Making your own can be far less toxic, less expensive, and less irritating to your skin.
Air fresheners	Plug-in air fresheners, room sprays and reed diffusers typically contain a host of synthetic chemicals that can aggravate lungs and skin . Remove all from your environment; if you want something natural consider a few drops of wild orange/lemon and/or lavender essential oils in a spray bottle with water.
Soap	Soap can be very drying to your skin , particularly if you wash your hands multiple times per day. Consider some gentler soaps such as castile soap in a foam pump bottle. You can make your own soap diluted with water and essential oils to nourish the skin. Rubbing is the most important part of hand washing (more than the soap) so ensure you use friction to remove germs/dirt.
Chlorine	<p><u>Swimming:</u></p> <p>Swimming pools typically use chlorine to keep clean, even salt water pools have some chlorine in them. In Australia, it's really common for kids and adults to know how to swim and it can be hard to avoid swimming altogether.</p> <p>If you can find a pool with ozone, or swim in the ocean, these can be better options (but not always convenient). If a chlorinated pool is your only option, you can protect your skin by using a barrier between you and the water – carrier oil all over (like fractionated coconut oil) prior to getting in the pool. This can minimize the chlorine absorption.</p> <p>Afterwards, ensure to rinse off straight away. There are some after swim sprays available which you can spray on to neutralize the chlorine. These are an ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) in water which you can easily make your own.</p> <p><u>Bathing:</u></p>



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In Australia, water is chlorinated to prevent bacteria from growing. Drinking and bathing in chlorinated water can further exacerbate eczema (drinking it can affect your gut bacteria), so consider installing **water filters** in your kitchen for **drinking** and in your **shower** for bathing..

Make Up

Lipstick, primer, foundation, eye shadows, blush, mascara, eyeliner, lip gloss... all of these contain a wide variety of different chemicals which are often **not tested for safety** in humans - some of these are not recommended for exposure in large amounts. Even with regular use in small amounts, these chemicals can accumulate in your body (often in your adipose tissues) and have been found in the breastmilk of new mums...eek!

Select a brand with minimal added ingredients – **mineral make ups** can be an option without too many extra chemicals.

Shampoo & Conditioner

Ever looked at the back of a shampoo or conditioner bottle? Chemicals to avoid here are Sodium Laurel Sulfate, Mineral Oils, Parabens, Propylene Glycol, as well as formaldehyde producing chemicals too.

If you'd like to go completely natural, your scalp can rebalance and not require these harsh shampoos if you wash with just water (sometimes called 'no 'poo' method). This process of your scalp 'relearning' to not overproduce oils which can take about a month or so. If you'd like to use something, washing with a small amount of **bicarbonate of soda** to cleanse and **raw apple cider vinegar** and water to rinse can be a more natural substitute.

Dry Shampoo

Dry shampoos can extend the time between washes by absorbing some of the oil produced by your scalp. They can be quite handy (particularly when travelling) however are full of another bunch of potential nasties.

You can make your own dry shampoo really easily with sifted tapioca flour/**arrowroot flour** with a bit of **cocoa powder** to darken for those with darker hair colour, add some geranium, rosemary or lavender oils for some nourishment to your hair. Just apply a tiny amount with an old blusher brush.

Deoderant

Most of the supermarket-purchased **deoderants contain aluminium** as a primary ingredient. Aluminium in the body has been associated with neurodegenerative conditions such as Alzheimer's dementia.



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There are many more natural options on the market –salt crystals stick, Three Mamas and Black Chicken are some options that many have found effective.

Some people find bicarbonate of soda an irritating ingredient – look for one without bicarbonate of soda, or make your own from essential oils such as cedarwood, lavender and tea tree, coconut oil and arrowroot powder.

Bubble bath

Many of us like a bubble bath, however these can be irritating to eczematous or sensitive skin. Epsom salts are high in magnesium, which can help relax and support a restful sleep. Combine **Epsom salts, some jojoba oil, and a drop or two of lavender** and frankincense essential oils for a calming bath soothing to the skin.