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SKIN-CARE TREATMENTS | UPDATED JUNE 3, 2024

# The 13 Very Best Treatments for Eczema



By Rachael Griffiths, a writer at the Strategist covering beauty, fashion, and travel.

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## Best in Class

The Strategist's carefully chosen and rigorously vetted flagship shopping guides. Learn about our methodology [here](#), and find all our Best in Class guides [here](#).

Photo-Illustration: Courtesy of the retailer

In this article

One of the most difficult things about having eczema (an inflammatory condition of the skin also known as atopic dermatitis) is that what works for one person might not work for the others. Some people swear by colloidal oatmeal, and others recommend beeswax. When my eczema flares up, my preferred treatment is the greasiest ointment I can find. Some serious cases of eczema will require prescription treatments, but other patients can get by with an over-the-counter treatment. However, little adjustments can help: All of the experts we consulted recommended five-minute showers with lukewarm water and switching to products that are fragrance-free, hypoallergenic, and clear of harsh chemicals. “For eczema-prone skin, hydration is the name of the game,” says Dr. Corey L. Hartman, founder of Skin Wellness Dermatology in Birmingham, Alabama.

Because reading ingredients lists can be confusing, especially if most are completely unpronounceable, I did the dirty work for you by having dermatologists and people with firsthand experience tell me their favorite and most-recommended lotions, creams, and balms for eczema-prone skin. Most of them have received a seal of acceptance from the National Eczema Foundation, so they won’t exacerbate the condition and will keep your flare-ups at bay. I’ve also cross-referenced these picks with the stuff that I use to keep my eczema-prone skin calm.

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## What we’re looking for

Ingredients +

Price +

Best eczema treatment overall



## Vanicream Moisturising Skin Cream

\$14

\$16 now 13% off

**Ingredients:** Petrolatum, glycerin | **Price:** 16 ounces (approx. \$0.87 per ounce)

We've recommended Vanicream time and time again for the most irritated kinds of skin — it's great for dry skin, rosacea-prone skin, and it's just as great for eczema-prone skin. And don't just take my word for it: Half of the dermatologists I spoke to brought up Vanicream. The reason is simple: It's free of anything that could irritate your skin, including fragrance, lanolin, parabens, formaldehyde, dyes, and more. Instead, it's packed with soothing ingredients, like petrolatum (which also makes up Vaseline). As a notoriously finicky condition, eczema can flare up easily with just one wrong ingredient — and take a while to go back to normal — so our dermatologists think it's better to be cautious with your creams and stick to a completely hypoallergenic product. Marisa Garshick, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Cornell, New York Presbyterian Medical Center, recommends the lotion version, too, which is also "free of the most common allergens that can worsen eczema." It has a thinner texture than the cream, so it'd be much better for the summer, when you can settle for something a little less heavy-duty, since cold weather wreaking havoc on your skin is less of a factor. But the cream isn't as heavy as you might think, Strategist writer Lauren Ro tells me. "I was surprised by how easily it spread," she says. "It absorbed instantly, without leaving too much of a residue, unlike the Nivea or the AmLactin ones, which always felt a bit sticky."

## Best everyday eczema treatment



## CeraVe Moisturizing Cream

\$17

**Ingredients:** Ceramides, hyaluronic acid, glycerin / **Price:** 19 ounces (approx. \$0.90 per ounce)

I call this my old faithful, because I'm never without a tub. We've written about it many, many, many times before. It contains ceramides, which Hartman calls "the building blocks of a healthy skin barrier," it will provide your dry, itchy skin the protection it needs to stay hydrated. Hartman also particularly likes the ointment-like texture that's "non-greasy" and thinks it "should be a part of every eczema treatment plan." Thanks to the hyaluronic acid and glycerin, too, it'll be exceptionally hydrating, keeping your skin soothed for longer stretches of time.

## Best lightweight cream for eczema



## La Roche-Posay Lipikar Soothing Relief Eczema Cream With Colloidal Oatmeal

\$15

**Ingredients:** Prebiotic water, colloidal oatmeal, niacinamide /

**Price:** 13.5 ounces (approx. \$1 per ounce)

If you prefer something lightweight and even faster absorbing, I'm a fan of the La Roche-Posay eczema safe line. Garshick is also a fan, and suggests this cream with added colloidal oatmeal for the itch. "It contains a high concentration of prebiotic water, which may have a role in improving the skin microbiome that's linked to inflammation and irritation of the skin." Niacinamide is another ingredient in it that can be helpful for calming redness and inflammation.

## Best SPF for eczema-prone skin

**VERY GOOD  
DEAL!**

## Aveeno Protect + Hydrate Moisturizing Body Sunscreen Lotion

\$27

~~\$39~~ now 31% off

**Ingredients:** Prebiotic oat / **Price:** 12 ounces (Approx. \$1.88/ounce)

No matter your skin type, or how sensitive you are, SPF is a pivotal step in every skin-care routine. As dermatologist and founder of FryFace Dr. Fayne Frey tells her patients, "First and foremost, sunscreen. Daily application of sunscreen protects the skin from sun damage and skin cancer. Like brushing your teeth, sunscreen should be something you do every single day." For patients with eczema, Frey recommends a hydrating lotion from Aveeno. (Aveeno is an Eczema Association-approved brand that I recommend time and time again for those with sensitive skin and for its reliability.) Its lotion has a high SPF rating of 60 (well above the 30 minimum that she recommends to patients) and includes hydrating prebiotic oat to soothe irritated skin. It's also suitable to use on the face, and shouldn't break you out, either: Frey also recommends it to her patients who are acne-prone.

## Best ointment for eczema flare-ups



## CeraVe Healing Ointment \$11

**Ingredients:** Ceramides, hyaluronic acid, petrolatum | **Price:** 3 ounces (approx. \$4 per ounce)

During thick and heavy flare-ups, I reach for a suitably greasy ointment over a cream or lotion. That's because ointments are more effective at sealing in moisture. Again, I'm recommending a choice from CeraVe. Like the cream, the ointment contains an ample amount of ceramides to protect your skin's barrier. And Maral Skelsey, the director of the Dermatologic Surgery Center of Washington, points out that it's also lanolin free and unscented but has a higher

percentage of petrolatum than the cream, so it'll feel more like Vaseline being rubbed in rather than a creamy texture that blends right away.

## Best heavy ointment for eczema flare-ups



### Aquaphor Healing Ointment \$18

**Ingredients:** Petrolatum | **Price:** 14 ounces (approx. \$1 per ounce)

And then there's always the "cult favorite" Aquaphor, which Hartman calls "the most matte, most elegant of the petrolatum products on the market." Because it contains a high percentage of petrolatum, mineral oil, glycerin, and panthenol, Aquaphor will protect the skin as well as "trap in moisture better than most," as Hartman explains. Dermatologist Dr. Susan Binder is also an Aquaphor advocate, and advises that it's "great when used immediately after the shower or bath to lock in moisture and help heal dry, cracked skin," (though Bider warns that it can feel "a bit greasy.") As it's such a heavy-duty ointment, both experts recommend it for use during a flare-up, when skin is in crisis.

## Best balm for eczema flare-ups



## Aveeno Eczema Therapy Itch Relief Balm \$20

**Ingredients:** Colloidal oatmeal, glycerin | **Price:** 11 ounces  
(approx. \$1.50 per ounce)

If you're really suffering from an itch, it's likely because your skin is desperate for some moisture. "The dryer skin gets, the more likely the eczema flares," says Skelsey. It's why your first line of defense for eczema-prone skin should be a thick, gentle moisturizer. She likes this itch-relief balm from Aveeno (which we've covered before) because it's "fragrance free, hypoallergenic, and has colloidal oatmeal, which helps heal skin" and stops the incessant itching that eczema sometimes causes. As an added bonus, she mentions that the added soy helps fade dark spots that eczema can leave behind.

## Best patch for itchy skin



## Re/Cover Eczema Relief System

\$40

**Ingredients:** Colloidal oatmeal / **Price:** \$2.80 per treatment

Here's something a little different. I've been using it on the little patches of eczema that crop up on my legs. It's a two-step system: Step one involves applying a cream with colloidal oatmeal to calm the itchy patch of skin, then you apply a moisturizing patch over the area to seal the cream in. But crucially, I've found it stops me from itching, and means I can wear materials I'd usually avoid during a flare-up (such as denim). It looks a little unchic (I've been asked if it was a nicotine patch before), but to stop me from going to town on my flare-ups, I think it's worth it.

## Best lotion for eczema



## La Roche-Posay Lipikar Triple Repair Moisturizing Body Cream \$20

**Ingredients:** Shea butter, glycerin, niacinamide, prebiotic water /  
**Price:** 13.5 ounces (approx. \$1.50 per ounce)

Lotion is an excellent option to keep your whole body moisturized. Again, I'm pointing you toward La Roche-Posay. "Treatment of eczema revolves around maintaining and rebuilding the skin barrier," says dermatologist Karan Lal. To help keep the skin barrier healthy, he recommends this lotion from La Roche-Posay. "It keeps skin moist for up to 48

hours and helps to rebalance part of the skin's microbiome," he says. "It's not as greasy as petrolatum and it's easy to apply and reapply." It contains lots of hydrating ingredients like ceramides, shea butter, and glycerin, along with niacinamide, which helps with hyperpigmentation and fortifies the skin's barrier.

## Best face wash for eczema



## La Roche-Posay Lipikar Wash AP+ Gentle Foaming Moisturizing Wash \$20

**Ingredients:** Shea butter, glycerin, niacinamide, prebiotic water /  
**Price:** 11 ounces (approx. \$2 per ounce)

Foaming, fragrant face washes can be triggering for eczema, so Lal recommends a face wash that'll both cleanse and hydrate simultaneously. He likes this one from La Roche Posay, which is specifically formulated for extra-dry, sensitive skin. It's so gentle, it can even be used on babies as young as two weeks old. "I recommend this for newborns," says Lal.

## Best eczema treatment for the face



**First Aid Beauty Ultra Repair Face Moisturizer** \$28

**Ingredients:** Colloidal oatmeal, shea butter, ceramides | **Price:** 1.7 ounces (approx. \$16 per ounce)

It's worth noting that any of the moisturizers mentioned above are suitable for use on the face — I have acne-prone skin, and the CeraVe moisturizer has always been kind to me. But for a moisturizer specifically geared toward the face, Garshick suggests First Aid Beauty (a favorite moisturizer of our eczema-prone beauty writer Rio) because it contains colloidal oatmeal for calming inflammation and itchy skin, shea butter to protect the natural skin barrier, and ceramides. The moisturizer is also noncomedogenic, so it shouldn't block pores.

## Best eczema treatment for hands



## Neutrogena Norwegian Formula Hand Cream

\$10 for 2

**Ingredients:** Glycerin | **Price:** 2 ounces (approx. \$2.50 per ounce)

New York-based dermatologist Dhaval Bhanusali offered this tidbit about hand creams: "Neutrogena Norwegian Hand cream is pretty much universally loved by all dermatologists" because it has its skin sothers. The formula is slightly different from other hand creams in that it's rich in glycerin, an ingredient he says is ideal for eczema-prone skin since it's gentle, calming, and a humectant that draws water from the air to moisturize.

## Best eczema treatment for flared-up hands



**The Naked Bee Hand & Cuticle Healing Salve**

\$9

\$10 now 10% off

**Ingredients:** Beeswax, sunflower oil and shea butter | **Price:** 1.5 ounces (approx. \$8.53 per ounce)

Strategist contributor Chelsey Pippin gets eczema flare-ups on her hands from time to time. But she prefers to avoid steroid creams — to her, they’re “greasy, smelly, and end with me leaving icky fingerprints on my keyboard, the fridge handle, the doorknob, my clothes, you name it.” Instead, she slathers this Naked Bee salve over the affected area. It’s made with — you guessed it — beeswax, as well as sunflower oil and shea butter. And its teeny metal tin makes it easy to carry around when you need to reapply.

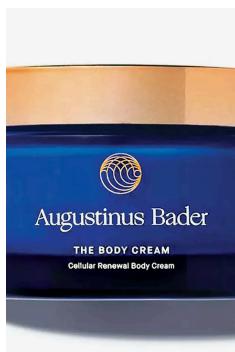
## Some other eczema treatments we've written about:



**A nourishing body butter for scaly skin**

\$29

[BUY AT AMAZON](#)



**“Rich people skin” body cream**

\$190

[\\$190 AT NORDSTROM](#)

[\\$165 AT VIOLET GREY](#)



**A cream designed to soothe patches on baby's skin**

\$12

[BUY AT WALMART](#)

## Our experts