



# FOUR SEASONS DERMATOLOGY

354 MOUNTAIN VIEW DR. • SUITE 300 • COLCHESTER, VT 05446-5988 • PHONE 802-864-0192 • FAX 802-860-4919

## Dilute Bleach Soaks

Itching, scratching and the immune dysregulation of atopic dermatitis can lead to increased risk of infection from superficial skin flora, especially *Staphylococcus Aureus*. One technique that can help decrease the number of infections and possibly reduce the need for antibiotics in patients with eczema is called "Bleach Baths". Here are our simple recommendations:

Swimming pools are chlorinated to help cut-down on microbes living in the water. You will "make your own swimming pool" right in the bathtub. This special water will help cut down microbes on your skin.

### Steps:

- Start by adding lukewarm water to full a tub for a normal bath (about 40 gallons)
- Put  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of common liquid bleach (plain Clorox or Store Brand – not scented) into the bath water. Check the bleach bottle to make sure that the concentration of bleach (also known as Sodium Hypochlorite) is about 6%.
- Completely mix the added bleach in the water. This should create a solution of diluted bleach (about 0.005%), which is a little stronger than a chlorinated swimming pool water.
- Soak in the chlorinated water for about 10 minutes.
- Thoroughly rinse your skin clear with lukewarm, fresh water at the end of the bleach bath.
- As soon as you are finished rinsing off, pat dry. Do not run dry as this is the same as scratching.
- Immediately apply any prescribed medications and/or emollients.
- Repeat bleach baths 2 to 3 times a week or as prescribed by your physician.

### The following restrictions may apply:

- Do not use undiluted bleach directly on your skin. Even diluted bleach baths can potentially cause dryness and/or irritation.
- Do not use bleach baths if there are many breaks or open areas in the skin (for fear of intense stinging and burning)
- Do not use bleach baths in patients with a known contact allergy to chlorine.

\*\*\*If using on a small area such as hands or feet, the ratio of bleach to water is 1 tablespoon of bleach per 1 gallon of water mixed in a basin/bucket\*\*\*