

## **Staying positive when your eczema child is unhappy**

Having a child who suffers from eczema is a constant worry but it's important to stay positive for the sake of the child and your own sanity. As my son grew older, sleepless nights became much less frequent as he was able to apply creams and lotions by himself and whenever the need arose.

However, on occasion, when he had a particularly bad flare-up, either my wife or myself would have to stay up and tend to him. What did become more evident, as he grew older, were the cycles of stress and flare-ups. The more stressed he became the worse the eczema seemed to be, and the worse it became the more stressed he was.

### **Staying mentally positive**

Staying mentally positive has helped in many ways and to reinforce this state of mind we found that being active and creative helped us all to focus on something other than my son's condition. Just because someone has eczema doesn't mean they cannot enjoy a certain amount of outdoor activity, so we would visit our local park at weekends during the cooler months, and on occasion, also a few summer evenings after the sun went down.

Kicking a ball around or flying a kite was a great way to forget about the ever present problems, if only for a short while. The respite was welcome and the additional activity helped to tire us all, making sleep time so much easier.

### **Looking for a distraction**

Boys want to do what boys do and my son wanted to do the same things that his friends were doing. At the time it was fishing. When my son reached the age of 12, I took him fishing to a local lake. I thought if he enjoyed being outdoors in the park then perhaps a few hours fishing would be a nice change. I thought later he could go fishing with his friends.

It didn't work out as planned however. He did actually enjoy the fishing but I guess the pollen won the day as he struggled to catch his breath and his eyes kept welling up making it difficult for him to see what he was doing. We gave up on that particular idea but we didn't give up on the idea to get him interested in a hobby.

### **Discovering a passion**

My brother plays guitar professionally and I asked if he would teach my son how to play. He agreed and so we arranged for my son to have lessons twice a week. We hit the jackpot. Within a few months music was being played all around our house and by the end of his first year of training, my son was a confirmed music addict. He has since gone on to play with friends and form a band.

As parents we couldn't be more proud. When a hobby becomes a passion, the mind becomes totally immersed. For my son, music has become all-consuming, and his eczema has taken a back seat. Another lesson learnt for us and yet it was so easy.

My son's eczema is no longer the main topic of conversation, and thankfully it no longer seems to be a real issue. All we worry about now is getting my son over to his uncle's house in time for guitar practice.

### **Before smartphones...**

Dealing with the effects of a child's eczema today may be quite different to what it was for us, at a time before smartphones. Today there are many apps that can help with tracking and providing advice for better sleep. However, we found physical exercise and mental stimulation to be the best all-round remedy.