



# natural skin solutions

High school kids aren't the only ones who get stuck dealing with problem skin. Here's how to treat your whole family's pesky skin woes—without harsh chemicals. by [Marygrace Taylor](#)

## ECZEMA

Skin that's deficient in the protein filaggrin has trouble retaining moisture. The result? Eczema, with symptoms of dry, itchy, inflamed, and scabbed skin, most commonly affecting babies and young kids, says Mona Gohara, M.D., a dermatologist in Danbury, Connecticut.

**Home remedy:** Soothe irritation with a daily anti-inflammatory bath: Add ½ cup of ground oats to warm bathwater, and have your baby soak for 15 minutes, says Gohara. Pat him dry, then lock in hydration with a natural moisturizer.

**Natural pharmacy:** Lafe's Organic Baby Lotion eases irritation with aloe vera (\$17 for 6 ounces, [lafes.com](#)), and Episencial Soothing Cream calms with cucumber extract (\$11 for 4 ounces, [episencial.com](#)).

**When to call the doc:** If the scabs start to ooze, which can indicate infection, or if home treatments haven't helped after six weeks, have a pediatrician take a look.

## SCARS

Light or dark; pink or purple; raised or flat—scars come in all varieties and occur when new tissue replaces damaged skin.

**Home remedy:** Once an open wound heals, massage the area daily with a natural oil (like vegetable) to flatten and prevent scar tissue from thickening, says Gohara. Fade older scars by applying green tea or diluted lemon juice—both have lightening effects—to the area, says Melissa Josselson, a naturopathic doctor

in Washington Township, New Jersey.

**Natural pharmacy:** Minimize scarring in newer wounds with Island's Own Herbal Savior, an organic lotion with aloe vera and anti-inflammatory tea tree oil (\$19 for 2.5 ounces, [islandsown.com](#)). Lighten older scars with Derma e Scar Gel, which contains herbal extracts and B vitamins (\$20 for 2 ounces, [dermae.net](#)).

**When to call the doc:** A scar isn't typically a medical risk—it's the body's way of healing damaged skin—but if it's bothersome in appearance, itchy, or sensitive, a dermatologist can discuss options like prescription creams or laser treatment.

## ACNE

Not exactly a warm welcome to adulthood: Zits are caused by changing hormones and clogged pores. Stress and a dairy-rich diet can also cause pimples.

**Home remedy:** Have your tween wash twice a day with a gentle cleanser, and exfoliate weekly to slough off dead skin cells. Help him de-stress with activities like yoga or meditation, says Gohara. And if dairy's a diet staple, consider cutting back to one daily serving (up his intake of other calcium sources like fortified soy-milk). Zap zits with antibacterial tea tree oil (available at natural health stores).

**Natural pharmacy:** Look for an all-natural cleanser with tea tree oil, such as Desert Essence Thoroughly Clean Face Wash (\$9.30 for 8.5 ounces, [desertessence.com](#)). Or try Alba Botanica Natural

ACNEdote Deep Pore Wash with pimple-fighting salicylic acid (\$10 for 6 ounces, [albabotanica.com](#)).

**When to call the doc:** If home remedies don't seem to be working, a dermatologist may suggest other options, such as prescription medications or creams.

## FINE LINES

Skin naturally loses its firmness and elasticity with age, though this can be exacerbated by free radicals and sun exposure.

**Home remedy:** Combat free radicals by eating lots of antioxidant-rich fruits and veggies, Josselson says. Exfoliating also minimizes lines: Gently massage skin with a mix of 1 tablespoon baking soda and 1 teaspoon water, twice a week, says Gohara. Consider sleeping on your back, too; laying on your stomach or side can cause fluid build-up under the eyes, which can decrease elasticity over time.

**Natural pharmacy:** Topical creams and serums, like MyChelle NoTox Anti-Wrinkle Serum (\$55 for 1 ounce, [mychelle.com](#)), and JASON 25,000 IU Vitamin E Age Renewal Moisturizing Crème (\$13 for 4 ounces, [jason-natural.com](#)), offer megadoses of antioxidant vitamins to help reduce fine lines.

**When to call the doc:** When natural remedies aren't giving you the results you want, a dermatologist can discuss more invasive options, like microdermabrasion, an exfoliation procedure that removes dead skin cells. ●