Back-to-School Transition and Eczema Mindset

Hey team, welcome back. It's August. You and your kid made it. They survived the sunscreen and the chlorine and obstacle trips all summer long. And the skin might be calm.

That would be amazing, or maybe it's not. Daycare and school season undoubtedly bring about another set of challenges, right? This season is such a mixed bag of emotions because it is kind of exciting to get all your stuff together.

and get on a more structured routine. But it's also a little sad to say goodbye to summer days. And maybe you're at home with the little ones and you are just waiting for it to not be so hot that you can go to the playground.

So wherever you in your season of life, there's a definite transition happening. It's a man-made one. I mean, we're still 100% in the thick of summer, but here in Denver, the kids go to school next week and the teachers are already back in building.

And I know for a lot of you, summer's over and that means there's whole new environment that your child is going to be in for for a good number of hours every single week.

And whether that's daycare or school or preschool or something else entirely, I want you to know there are ways to handle it well and to mitigate as many inflammatory assailants as we possibly can.

So today I wanted to walk you through the things that I've learned to watch out for, and more importantly, the really easy fixes that mitigate each of these exposures, because if we're in the healing phase, that's the whole game.

Eventually, we'll be resilient enough to live in this world and take it as it is, but if you're We really got to do everything we can. And I want to everything I can for my kids' environments to just make them as least toxic as possible to avoid further problems down the road, you know?

And this is always top of mind for me. I'll never drop it. Oh, it's okay for them to be around bleach all day and just throw up my hands. Like that's never going to happen.

August Checklist and Emotional Regulation

And so that's it. That's the game. We're doing everything that we possibly can to reduce the inflammatory load that our kids run into all day and all night.

And you'll never be able to eliminate it at all. and that is not the point. we're just reducing their exposure. Their inflammation bucket, if you're listening now and they're experiencing eczema, their inflammation buckets are already full.

They're already too full. They are spilling over. they're spiling out through the skin. So we're doing everything that we can to dial it back in and none of it requires turning yourself inside out.

It just takes a little extra care and intention and usually only a one-time ask because everyone at school and daycare gets it. They've been around kids, they know and they are on your side and even if you get a side eye that's okay.

So my goal is here to just help you get through the season with a little less stress and a bit more preparedness so you're set up to actually mitigate the school's starting flare instead of reacting to one after it happens.

So let's get into it! Is your child struggling with itchy nights and endless flare-ups? I'm Andrea McHugh, mom of four and host of eczema kids. Here you'll find natural solutions that actually work so that you can heal your childhood's ectomote without steroids, without the overwhelm, and finally see calm, healthy skin again.

Let's get into it. So I've been doing this long enough now that I built a mental August checklist. And it's not because I'm anxious about it anymore. It's because, I know what to look for.

Once you know, it stops being scary and it just becomes routine. That's really the goal of this episode. I just want you walking into the school year ready and not worried at all.

Today we're going through the big ones and every single one comes with a really simple, simple fix. And nothing here means overhauling your life or your child's backpack.

It's just having the right things on hand and being a little proactive. And before we get into the list of physical triggers, I just wanted to talk about the transition and the new environment and new routine and air and faces and expectations.

It's a lot for kids and there's more going on emotionally for them than they have words for yet. And I talked about this with Julie Ross last week and she developed a homeschool curriculum.

Trigger 1: Hand Soap and Sanitizer

So it's very fitting this time of year. She spoke about how the nervous system holistically affects these kids. This undoubtedly affects their skin and it affects everything.

Everything is connected. I feel like every day is a new day. opportunity to learn about how everything is energy and everything's connected all the time.

And when a kid is regulating a whole new world, their body really, really feels that and sometimes skin is where it shows up. It's boiling out through the skin.

So keep that in the back of your mind as we go through physical triggers because Often both things are happening at once. So trigger number one is hand soap and sanitizer by far the first trigger that we have to address every school year in daycare, in co-op setting, really anywhere your child spends time outside your care.

It's the hand, soap, and the sanitizer. And this really is the biggest one. And I really put focus and intention in here because the classroom sanitizer is very heavy on chemicals and fragrance.

If your kid is using it five, six, seven times a day, that's a lot of stripping on the barrier. That barrier is already compromised and it's just not doing our friends any favors.

And I remember when my then two-year-old had eczema, I mean, the insides of her wrists were a mess. They were peeling off completely. So every hand washing was an extra challenge.

For us, we just send them each with a little bottle of Dr. Bronner's hand sanitizer. easy to find at all the grocery stores and you just put that in their backpack or their bin or wherever else.

You can supply it for the whole classroom. We've done that because I don't want any of the kids to have to use those gel sanitizers, right? It's just not the way.

And if they have a separate one, the teachers know they And if they're in preschool or younger, sanitizer isn't even allowed. So for the younger kids and the older kids too, you have to bring your own soap as well.

And for that, we also turned to Dr. Bronner's in the light blue package and you can combine it in a separate container with 50% water, 50 percent soap, or you just use a mini bottle of the Dr Bronners.

Trigger 2: Classroom Cleaners

unscented liquid soap and just use it directly as hand soap because the triclosan and all the heavy chemicals that are in the soap aren't doing anyone's immunity or skin barrier any favors and washing hands constantly in a post-COVID world has made that so much worse for our kiddos.

And so wherever you land on this, that's fine. The schools will absolutely accommodate you We're our child's advocate. That's our job. I'm sure my kids' past teachers thought I was a little crazy and that's fine because I just couldn't stand the peeling hands anymore.

And that was even for my non-XMI kiddo. She came home with just burning scaly hands just from the amount of pan washing with that really, really strong, So that was my first experience with it.

That's when this first was brought to my attention. And trigger number two is classroom cleaners. This is one that not a lot of people think about. The desks and the nap mats and art supplies and tables, they all get wiped down with whatever the school is approved to use and that's almost always bleach.

It's cheap and it's fast and schools have to comply with strict CDC and health regulations. Their hands are somewhat tied, but I have found a cleaner that is school approved, that's county approved.

That's all the powers that be approved it's called Enviro Cleanze A. It's a company out of Texas. I'll link it in the show notes because it is a genuinely valuable resource.

You can bring that to the administrator of your school or daycare and ask to use this in its place. it does cost for them bleach. that part's true, But it doesn't irritate the airway lining and it worsen asthma, and it's also so much better for indoor and outdoor air quality and for every living being that is in that space, not just our kids.

And I have a full protocol for how to bring this into a classroom inside the eczema elimination method. It takes a little extra doing, but it is worth it.

If your child is going into an in-home daycare, it will probably be an easier conversation. Definitely less to navigate, they are held to the same standards.

So, a conversation, no less.

Trigger 3: Snacks and Birthday Treats

And I'm focusing on both of these things, and it may sound trite, but this is the tip I really want you to walk away with and possibly share with another parent, because we can band together and help create a much healthier environment for all the kids and the teachers and everybody in those classrooms.

preparing to go talk to the teacher about making a change like the cleaner swap. About making it change, like, the cleaners swap, you just have to have one of those talk-to-the-teacher moments, which is fine.

But I know for a lot of parents that conversation feels daunting and, y'know, just keep it short, don't over-explain, and I always come with the solution ready in hand.

So something like my daughter has eczema and this cleaner tends to play her skin. Would it be okay if I sent an alternative for her? just really short and simple and they care about the kids and you're not asking permission.

You're just offering a really easy answer to it and every teacher I've ever worked with has said yes. Trigger number three is definitely the snacks and the birthday treats.

This isn't a nutrition talk, but between the holidays and birthdays and early release Friday, there's always a snack or treat or something to celebrate with food.

And most kids hit a lot of shared food this time of year and it adds up really, really quickly. You don't need to overhaul anything. My quickest fix for this was just keeping a box of YumEarth candy or whatever it is that they like that's dye-free and gluten- free and dairy free, and all the things.

The teacher would keep it in the closet or in their desk and just something with a decent shelf life.

Trigger 4: Clothes, Uniforms, and Laundry Detergent

Then when those treats are passed around, your child doesn't have to say no thank you, and you're not undoing all the work that you've already put into the healing plan.

And then I also asked for a heads up if there was a birthday that week, so I could possibly send a baked treat if I had enough notice and hadn't had it together enough to actually make it, but lean on the backup candy every time I didn't, which was plenty.

So trigger number four is new clothes and uniforms and laundry detergent. New uniforms, and clothes carry that manufacturing residue and hand-me-downs.

At times at friends' houses means different detergents than you would use at home. We have a lot of friends that use very smelly laundry detergent and either one can flare the skin really, really quickly and especially anywhere that there's friction.

So the fix is really simple. Just wash anything before it's worn and keep a travel size soothing cream in the bag for any friction spots or colors or waistbands or anywhere it that might rub.

Trigger number five is sleep and routine disruption, or really the lack of routine and disruption. And this one's quick, but I didn't want to leave it out because new wake times and less sleep while adjusting to a totally different schedule is a real flare driver.

parents don't connect to the skin at all and the fix isn't complicated here either.

Trigger 5: Sleep and Routine Disruption

It's just a consistent bedtime routine and it matters this time of year more than any other because it's still light out so the kids are convinced that they don' t need to go to bed and there's so much more stimulation and newness than they've had all summer and we need their immune systems to be as robust and resilient as possible and they need nervous systems as calm as possibly and that extra 30 minutes of sleep really, really matters.

And if you can get your ideal bedtime a week before school starts, even if that's this week, do it. I've been trying to get my kids to go to bed earlier and what's worked for us is getting their pajamas on and their teeth brushed as early as possible.

The earlier that happens, the earlier bedtime happens. If you're home for the night with nowhere else to go after the activities or to school, even if that's 3.30, then do the bath.

Then do things and do pajamas. And then have dinner and then brush teeth. That's a fine sequence. It's probably better for them anyway because then we're taking off the day.

all the germs and all of the pollens that are still out there and the extra things that they've encountered at school and sports. It's a bit of a push in the moment, but it beats leaving everything until the very end, which never gets done on time.

So a leisurely epsom salt bath helps a lot here. And it signals to the body that the day is done and it's time to settle. That's the list, sanitizer and soap.

cleaners, snacks, clothes, and sleep. And every one of them has a really easy fix that doesn't mean rethinking your whole routine at all. I just want you walking into the school year feeling ready and not on edge and you don't need to catch every single thing perfectly.

You just need what to look out for, and now you do. And if you want a shortcut version of what you actually keep in the bag, that's exactly what the Skin Cover Trio is for.

It comes in travel size and stainless steel canisters, so it's really easy to send along. If you one more thing in your routine before school starts, the Dream Spray and the prebiotic tea are really good fits for this time of year.

Start baking them in now into your routine before the season really kicks into high gear.

Wrap-Up: School-Year Prep and Helpful Tools

You can use the prebiotic tea in the morning in a smoothie or on its own. It's really delicious and subtly sweet. And the Dream Spray is a lovely signal to the brain that it's time for sleep and it'll help with that earlier bedtime.

Every essential oil inside that blend in that Dream spray blend is very, very soothing. Its sleep inducing, its relaxing, and most importantly, eczema safe and ragweed free.

And it is genuinely beneficial to start with those tools now before you have to play catch-up. And if you're in that boat, no problem. Send me a message and I'll work with you.

But that's it, friends. I'm sending you well wishes and good luck as you head into this next school and daycare year. Even if your kids aren't headed to school or daycare, if you're just home, there's something about this time of year.

And I hope this has helped you feel calm because that's genuinely steering the ship for everyone else in your home. Right? So take care and I will talk to you next week.

Thanks friends. Thank you for helping with my eczema. Love you. Thank you for listening today, friend. I know healing your child's skin isn't easy, but you're doing it one smart step at a time.

If this episode gave you a little hope or a better night's sleep, leave a quick review so more exhausted parents can find eczema kids and finally rest easy too.

Follow, share, and let's help more kids heal. Take care.