Are You Using Oil Wrong? The Best Way to Use Oil on Eczema Skin Transcript

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Welcome and episode overview

Hey team, welcome back to the X-Men Kids podcast. I'm your host, Andra McHugh, and I know you've tried coconut oil and olive oil, maybe even bought some vitamin E, then you see the results and you know that these oils aren't interchangeable.

One commonly recommended oil has been shown to disrupt the skin barrier and another has extensively with eczema and produced improvements. And some oils are particularly rich in fatty acids that are important to the skin barrier and some aren't even technically oils and that bottle of vitamin E oil is not what you think it is.

There's another piece of this that I think that we're missing usually and that's how you use the oil because that matters a lot too and I actually like to put oil on eczema prone skin before the bath and then use water and topical layers strategically afterwards.

So today we are digging into all the natural oils that are out there that is commonly used in products and you'll see on grocery shelves and skin care shelves.

kind of debunking and talking about it through an eczema lens, like what can actually help the skin, what will actually assist your overall goals in clean, clear, calm, skin.

Because if you're putting something on your child's skin every single day, you should know what it's actually doing. So before we jump in, if your childhood skin needs some extra love right now, You can find my herbal oil and skin comfort trio, which that is the first step at eczemakids.com.

And the Skin Comfort Trio is a three-step topical system that I created for eczema prone skin. The herbal oil, the comfort spray, and the soothing cream.

And later in this episode, I'm going to show you how I use them and layer them.

Why skin barrier health matters in eczema

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 you can heal your childhood exima without steroids, without the overwhelm, and finally see calm, healthy skin again.

Let's get into it. barrier. And one of the most important jobs is to keep water inside the body and keep unwanted things outside the bodies. An eczema-prone skin isn't doing that effectively, and we can see that happening.

One way researchers measure this is something called transepidermal water loss, or T-E-W-L. It's basically the measurement of how much water is escaping through the skin.

In exema prone skin, that water loss tends to be much higher and the barrier is more permeable. And that's why they're so reactive right there. It's just not doing the job.

it's not keeping the moisture in and keeping allergens and toxins and all the things that they are reacting to out. Water escapes more easily and skin becomes much more dry and vulnerable.

And then the irritants and the allergens penetrate that barrier much more easily as well. And the skin gets itchy and your child scratches and that scratching damages the barrier further and then more water escapes and skin get drier and round and around we go.

So when we're thinking about what to put on eczema prone skin because we have to something on it to deal with symptom management because they are so dry.

and itchy and red and irritated. We're not just asking, will this make the skin feel soft? We are asking what is this actually doing to the Skin Barrier?

And what are they absorbing through their biggest organ, the skincare? What are the going to have to detoxify from afterwards, after we put this on it?

you know, none of that is the same thing. Because natural certainly doesn't automatically mean good for eczema. And I wanted to go through it, I want to talk about olive oil.

I make a point of pointing out in my shop that all the products are olive-oil-free. and I did that with intention, because when I was formulating these, I knew the research and I also experimented a lot with my kiddos and knew that it wasn't doing their skin barrier any good long term because olive oil sounds like the most innocent natural thing in the world.

and it's full of healthy fats and we eat it and were encouraged to eat and people have been putting it on babies forever and so surely it got to be good for dry skin but researchers have extensively tested this and there was a study involving adults with and without a history of atopic dermatitis of eczema and they applied oil on the skin twice a day for four weeks And the researchers found that the olive oil reduced the integrity of the skin barrier and caused mild redness.

Olive oil, coconut oil, and sunflower oil

And I guarantee that you see the same results, but it's also then hard to know that these are the results you're seeing when you already have a compromised skin barriers.

I want to share with you some more studies. One around sunflower oil. For some of you listening, I know sunflower is an automatic no-no. It's already something that they react to.

But, you know, that preserved skin barrier integrity and improved hydration. And that was a small study with adults. It wasn't a big pediatric trial. But I think it's important because it demonstrates something that we really need to understand and because natural doesn't tell us enough.

Like, we stopped drinking La Croix a while ago because I had natural flavors because What does that mean? We don't know. And that's how they get around a lot of things, right?

So side note, don t eat anything with natural flavors. You know, that s one of the things that we do ideally exclude from our children's healing diets to get them to clear, calm skin faster.

Same thing here, natural is just not the word. One thing doesn't heal eczema and natural isn't the one criteria that we have for exima-safe products. And every oil has a completely different fatty acid profile because olive oil is very rich in oleic acid and then high concentrations of oleac acid can disrupt the organization of lipids in the outermost layer of the skin.

So an oil can make the skin feel oily while simultaneously not being the best choice for maintaining the integrity of the barrier, which is so wild, right?

And that's exactly why I don't want you grabbing whatever oil happens to be in your kitchen and assuming that it's good for your child's eczema because it is natural.

Like the chemistry really, really matters here. And coconut oil is a little bit different and I want to talk about that because coconut constantly in the natural health world and we use it and cook with it, just like olive oil, we love it.

But depending on who you're listening to, coconut oil either cures everything or it should never touch the body, and neither is accurate. They've also done studies on coconut in a randomized double-blind clinical trial involving 117 children with mild to moderate eczema.

Researchers compared virgin coconut oil with mineral oil for eight weeks and the results were Of course, impressive, because don't use mineral oil. And eczema severity scores decreased by about 68% in the coconut oil group compared to about 38% percent in mineral group.

The coconut group showed better improvements in water loss and skin hydration. So I'm not going to say coconut is bad for exema. Research definitely doesn't support that.

And virgin coconut oil can be helpful for some kids that has strong antimicrobial properties, which is very, very favorable for eczema. And there's research investigating that, Which is really interesting.

But just in regular use, in experimental use. My years of doing this. It's not very hydrating for those with a compromised skin barrier. For those that have naturally oily skin, I think it's a fantastic thing to put on your skin.

But these kiddos are not that. That's who we're talking about. So in this context, coconut oil just doesn't do eczema-prone skin the service that it needs.

And I want to talk about sunflower oil, too, because that's in a lot of natural eczema products as well. And sunflower has a really different fatty acid profile, and it's generally much higher in linoleic acid, which is an essential fatty that is really important to the skin's lipid barrier.

I mean, they're all important, right? So sunflower is interesting for eczema-prone skin, but of course, not every sunflower oil has the same fatty acid profile like everything.

You have to look at the different grades, the difference levels of it. So there's high linoleic and then there is high oleic varieties, which brings us right back to the lesson.

The name on the front of the bottle doesn't tell you everything, so you have do inquire further. Also, many, do poorly with sunflower oil. So just keep that in mind.

It's another reason that sunflower is not in any of my products because it's just not effective for the eczema population at large.

Grapeseed, vitamin E, and ozonated oils

And then grapeseed oil is another one that you'll find out there. It's lightweight and it absorbs nicely and is typically rich in linoleic acid and grapes and grape seeds are also associated with a variety of antioxidant compounds.

So compositionally, there's a lot that's really interesting, but there is not a lots of research on grape seed oil and eczema, it's not the same as olive oil or coconut oil.

But it is a seed and you have to look out for that and again just look at the quality and where it's sourced, all the rest. I mean all of the things that you have to be cognizant of for every oil.

And then there's vitamin E oil and I just wanted to talk to you about that one because It's a really confusing name. There isn't a vitamin E fruit somewhere that somebody squeezes and then out comes vitamin e oil.

So vitamin is actually a family of fat soluble compounds and plants make them. And some of our richest natural sources of vitamin are not seeds and plant oils, including things like sunflower oil, So when vitamin E is naturally sourced for use in supplements or skincare products, so I gotta Be honest with you guys.

Usually most of those plant oils are soy. That's what it's derived from and Soy is a big no for the eczema

community at large while you're healing, right?

We really want to avoid this very very common very reactive allergen. So when you see typical vitamin E, you have to make sure it's source and check that out because it will likely be from soy.

That's why people react to vitamin So then a lot of times if a natural product has vitamin E oil and then you turn it around, you just want to know where it's sourced from but also what else is it blended with because it is usually blended into another carrier oil.

And then we want to know what is that carrier oil because we need to exactly what it is in everything that we're putting on to our kids. And that matters.

So we to need know, what that is carrier, but the label is not going to tell you. But that Carrier Oil matters because were going need everything we are putting onto our kid's skin.

And that is why a lot of natural formulations cause reactions because it's widely used in topical skin care formations. But that's also why, a lotta times, it can cause contact dermatitis, right?

Which is the exact opposite of what you want if you're already trying to combat normal atopic dermatitus. Right? So, I'm not trying make your head spin.

I am just telling you guys these things. You already know these thing because you've been trying every single thing that you can get your hands on and nothing's working and I'm just trying to explain to you why.

And then I also wanted to talk to about ozonated oil because that's really interesting because they're created by reacting ozone with an oil which creates a different oxygen containing compound within that oil.

And they're being studied for things like antimicrobial activity and wound healing, which is like fantastic, right? Because that's what we're doing. So that is really interesting when we are talking about compromised skin and eczema.

And I believe in ozone therapy, I've done some research for some other conditions with ozone. I think it can be really, really helpful, like cellulitis is one of those conditions that I would think would be very, very helpful.

And I remember I bought a bottle of ozonated olive oil, but that's the thing is like what oil is being ozinated? And then we have to go back to what are the properties of that oil and is it actually helpful for eczema?

Is it tolerated by my child? Usually the answer is no. And then there's jojoba, and that's the carrier that I ultimately choose to use because it's not a typical triglyceride oil.

It's predominantly a liquid wax ester. And that is interesting because human sebum, that natural oily substance that our skin produces, also contains wax esters and jojoba spreads really nicely.

It smells nice, it's incredibly stable and it makes a really nice carrier for medicinal herbs. And that last part was really, really important to me. Because I didn't want to create another single ingredient oil because I wanted to a botanical infusion because we need this, right?

Like I treat every one of our topical formulations as putting supplements on the skin.

Why jojoba is the chosen carrier oil

We need to use every vehicle available for putting antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory substances into our kids' tissues, right, into their cells so that they ultimately can repopulate and come back stronger and plumper and actually doing their job in terms of the skin barrier.

So, you know, putting herbs into an oil doesn't automatically make it better. The herbs need to be eczema-safe and ragweed-free because As with anything, some botanicals are irritating.

Some can cause contact dermatitis. Essential oils are not the same thing as herbal infusions. And when we're talking about kids whose skin barrier is already compromised, I really want to be especially thoughtful.

So the carrier matters and then obviously the herbs do too. I want herbs that have a meaningful history of topical use for dry, irritated, uncomfortable skin.

And wherever possible, I wanna know what modern research tells us about these plants and their constituents. So that's why the herbs are within the herbal oil at eczema kits were chosen.

They're there for very intentional reasons. The first herb in our formulation is marshmallow root. Marshmallow is a plant and it has an incredible history as a soothing herb.

One reason is its high mucilage content. Mucilage is made up of these slippery plant polysaccharides and that gives marshmallow its characteristic soothing quality.

Obviously, we need everything soothing, like bring it on. That's one of the reasons. It is so great for dry, uncomfortable skin. And researchers actually have studied topical marshmallow in children with eczema, and they put it up against 1% hydrocortisone.

They said in the study that both groups did improve, but the greater improvement in eczema severity was the group that used the marshmallow root versus the hydrocortisone.

And this was a small study. Obviously, bigger clinical trials are needed before you go shouting it from the rooftops. But this is true. I mean, we know this to be true, right?

Hydrocortizone is effective in the short term, but then we have to pay for it afterwards. And that's just sad. In marshmallow root, you do not have pay to for, and it's genuinely fueling the body with the properties that it really, really needs that are out of balance in this case of this dry eczema-prone skin.

It's a medicinal plant that has been used for thousands of years. So neem is the second herb that's within our herbal oil formulation and it has a long history of traditional use for troubled skin.

Herbal oil ingredients and their benefits

And modern research has identified a huge number of biologically active compounds within the plant. Neem is antimicrobial, high in antioxidants, it's anti-inflammatory, and these are all the things that our eczema-prone kiddos really, really need infused into their skin.

So that's why that one is in there. And we also have amulaki in our herbal oil. If you've been listening for any amount of time, you know I love Amalaki.

Amlaki is an incredibly rich plant. It is so high in polyphenols and antioxidant compounds and vitamin C. And again, I'm not saying Amilaki treats eczema, but I am saying that the properties of Amulaki high and Vitamin C high anti-inflammatory compounds to skin that is chronically stressed and inflamed and dry really need.

It needs antioxidant-rich botanicals and it needs vitamin C. Vitamin C is incredibly healing for the skin and helps the cellular turnover and that's why that it's a big part of our formulation.

And mangisa is another herb that's inside the eczema herbal oil. Mangisa has also a really long history of use in traditional herbal medicine and especially in preparations associated with skin health.

Modern researchers are investigating compounds within the plant for antioxidant and antimicrobial and anti-

inflammatory activity And I'm not saying, you know, because people have used this for thousands of years, it must work.

But we do know matter root is another word for it, is a lymph builder and a blood purifier. And if you're experiencing eczema, there is without a doubt a strong component of lymph stagnation happening.

a detoxification problem. And so, you know, the properties within the matter route really, really help both of those things along. Again, we're just putting it on the skin, letting it infuse into the tissues.

I mean, it works the same way that steroids work. Everything that you put on your skin is absorbed and then circulated and ultimately detoxified from your body.

So let's just make sure that everything that we put their skin, is for good use. And then I also put in Pao de Arco inside our herbal formulation and I did that because It has a lot of really interesting phytochemicals and this is really the philosophy behind the herbal oil in general.

I don't want to oil this, just there to make the skin oily. And I'm interested in what is actually being delivered into the scan and we need the most nutrients possible.

bottom line. And the last herb that I put into this formulation was Pao de Arco and I've put it in there because it also has a really long history of traditional medicine use and it contains a large number of interesting phytochemicals.

But ultimately, It is anti-inflammatory and it's anti microbial. And if you are experiencing eczema, you have a greater amount of staff on the skin, of colonization of the staff bacteria on this skin.

Everyone has some, but exima prone individuals have more, right? That's why you're prone to staff infections when you exema. And this herb really, really helps target that, helps keep those populations at bay, it helps balance the overall skin microbiome.

Because I know you're aware that the skin micro biome is a thing. It's separate from the gut microbiomes. Obviously, everything is connected and the world goes round and round.

But when we're specifically talking about the scan, our largest organ, Those are the herbs that I chose to address this very specific skin condition, which we know is also not a skin conditions at all, but symptom management is a thing, right?

We have to get past these symptoms, the itchiness and the redness and not sleeping and the general discomfort. I mean, this symptom management is the name of the game early on in your healing journey.

It's so, so crucial and it's important. So that's what we're doing. When we are putting on the eczema kids herbal oil, that is what were delivering into the skin.

There are so many anti-inflammatory, nourishing, anti microbial high polyphenol nutrients straight into the skin. The lipophilic properties of the oil drives all of those delicious properties the herbs straight in to the tissues.

And we do it via a method that takes all those properties and maintains them as best we can into that oil. It sincerely is taking supplements through the And the way that we use this oil is different than you might expect, because I put it on the kids before the bath.

And that makes a lot of sense when we look at what we understand about the eczema skin barrier, Thinking about the child that we're talking about, their skin is very dry and their barrier is compromised.

And now we are about to put them into water. Bathing can be very, very helpful for eczema because we give the outer layer of skin access to water, but the water itself can also be irritating.

in the city water and the well water alike for different reasons. And it's just one more thing that our little lexomachytos have to be protected from, unfortunately.

Even when we're filtering it, we still need to protect them from the water.

How to layer oil, bath, spray, and cream

So instead of making that dry, vulnerable skin and then putting it straight into the bath, I like to apply a thin layer of oil first and you warm it in between your hands and just massage it over your child's skin which is also doing them a service because it's really calming their nervous system and it can be a really really beautiful routine if you let it and a lot of days in my house it wasn't like that they were just running around and I just put it on as quickly as I could while they were running through the bathroom, it's fine.

You don't need to soak them in it, you just want a nice thin layer and ideally let it sit for a few minutes while the bath is running, I usually recommend.

And you could get their pajamas or brush their teeth, get the bath ready during this time, whatever works in your house. And then you put them in to a short, comfortably warm bath with Epsom salts.

You're not trying to scrub the oil off, you just let them be in it and detoxify. Then we get them out and then the next part matters a lot too. We're not scrubbing them dry, we're just gently patting the skin with a 100% cotton towel and we leave it slightly damp.

And then I'd like to layer and for us that looks like as comfort spray on the eczema spots and let that dry, and then you can put on another layer of oil for all the reasons that we talked about.

And then let it just absorb, then lock in all that moisture and all of the herbs from both steps with the cream. You just follow your child's skin. But the principle is We're using water and lipids together because oil and water don't mix, right?

And oil doesn't hydrate dry skin by magically adding water to it. And that's why simply pouring more and more oil into a completely parched skin isn't necessarily the answer.

But when we prepare the skin with oil, and then we bathe, then while the damp, we apply other topical layers. The soothing spray gives us our water-based step.

And then the herbal oil provides the jojoba and the botanical infusions. Then the soothing cream provides another emollient and occlusive layer where we need more protection.

That's a really different approach from my kid's skin looks dry, let's put oil and some cream on it. And by treating them in this way, one, right, as we talked about before, like this symptom management protocol is required now, in the here and now while we are actively healing.

When this is, I mentioned it earlier, this why it's so effective to their nervous system. It's not like, oh gosh, so this something that we have to manage.

This is I am taking care of you. You are safe. we're going to get through this. That's what I sometimes said out loud to my kids when I would do this in the past.

And this is certainly something that they can do on their own if they're older, but it all matters. It's why it's a part of this holistic plan. Not one piece is going transition from flare to clear skin, but this is one really integral piece of the pie.

And it's derived from herbal medicine. I mean, this has been a practice that people have used preventatively for thousands and thousands of years, and it is so incredibly effective for eczema prone skin.

And I know in the sea of eczema products, it can get very, very confusing. I just want you to take away from today's episode is natural isn't enough. Every ingredient has to have a real purpose and then it also has protecting, nourishing, addressing eczema-prone skin.

That is what we do here because it is so multifaceted, it so layered, and that's why our approach has to match the disease. I mean, also requires many layers.

So before you put anything on your child's skin, just ask, you know, what does this skin actually need? And then choose intentionally from there. And that's how all of our products are created.

They were created with health in mind. There are creative with the skin barrier in mine with rebuilding the skincare barrier and mind and then making sure that the liver doesn't have an extra burden after you do that, you know.

Final takeaways and product call to action

So if you want to try the herbal oil that I talked about today, I'll link it for you in the show notes and you can also try it at eczemakids.com. If you're ready to, try as the bigger routine that i spoke to earlier.

It's called, it's the first step in The Skin Comfort Trio. When you buy it as a trio, you definitely save and all of our exima products are in significantly larger sizes than other people's because it because we're treating eczema-prone skin.

So we need a lot of products. Our smallest is four ounce. It goes up from there. We have four ounces, eight ounces and 16 ounces available for all of my regulars.

That gives you three products that work synergistically to combat the hardest part of exema, the itching and the redness and dryness. I'll link both options below in the show notes and you can choose what makes sense for your child's skin health.

And tonight, whether you're using the herbal oil or something that you already have at home, just look at the ingredient label and just know what we're, using, and then try using it a little bit differently.

Oil before bath, short, comfortable, warm bath. Pat, don't scrub. And then layer. while that beautiful little skin is still a little damp. So we're not just throwing more stuff at dry skin and we are supporting the skin barrier intentionally.

Thank you for being with me today, friends. I love this stuff, I hope you do too. But as we in the season of new routines, i really hope that you try this one.

Try the Skin Comfort Trio, try the Herbal Oil Before Bath and let me know how it goes. Take care friends and I will talk to you next week. Thank you for helping with my eczema.

Love you. Thank 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 exima kids and finally rest easy too.

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