

## RESULTS NEWSLETTER FOR PEOPLE WHO TOOK PART

NOVEMBER 2024

# Eczema Bathing Study – what did we find out?

### The question we wanted to answer

People in our Eczema Citizen Science Community wanted to know how often they should have a bath or shower when they have eczema.

The Eczema Bathing Study was co-designed by people with eczema, healthcare professionals and researchers to answer this question. So, this study was designed **by** people with eczema, **for** people with eczema.



### Why was this important?

People often have questions about how best to bathe with eczema. This has been identified as a priority research question for many years, but until now no good studies had been done to answer it.

Because of the limited evidence to help people make choices, people are often given different advice from different people. This can be very confusing and frustrating for people living with eczema.

### What did we do in the study?

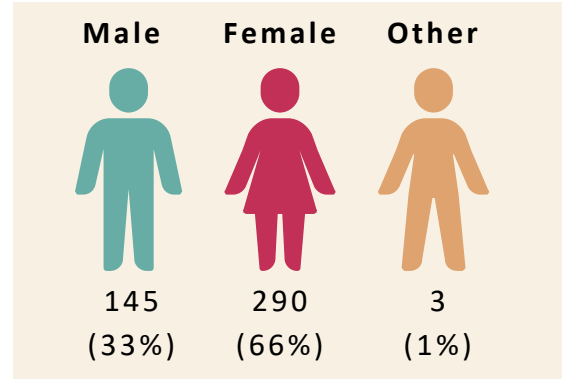
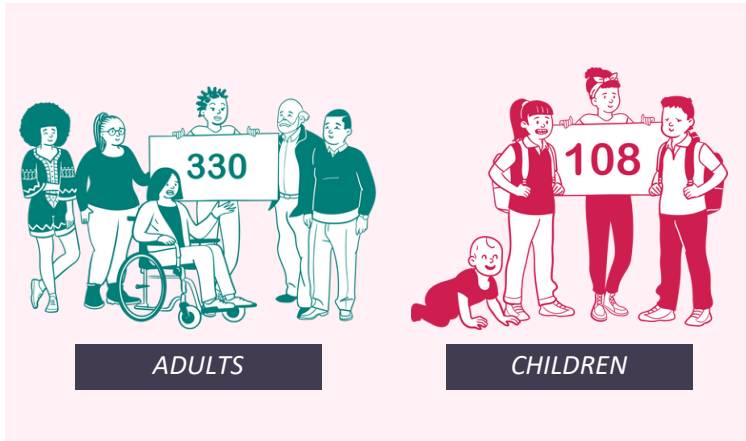
As people signed up for the study they were randomly put into two groups. This helped to ensure it was a fair test and the two groups of people were as similar as possible. One group was asked to have a bath or shower daily and the other group was asked to bathe weekly:



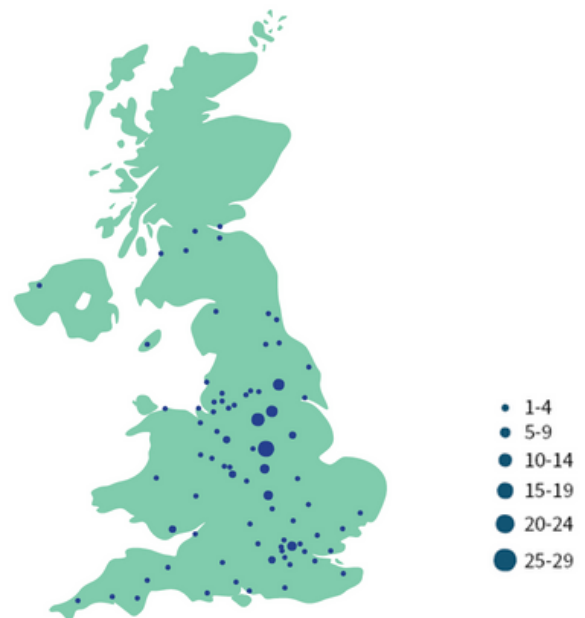
We compared these two ways of having a bath or shower over a period of 4 weeks. Each week the people in the study answered questionnaires about their eczema symptoms, treatments and how they had a bath or shower weekly or daily. People taking part didn't change their usual eczema treatments such as moisturising after bathing.

# WHO TOOK PART?

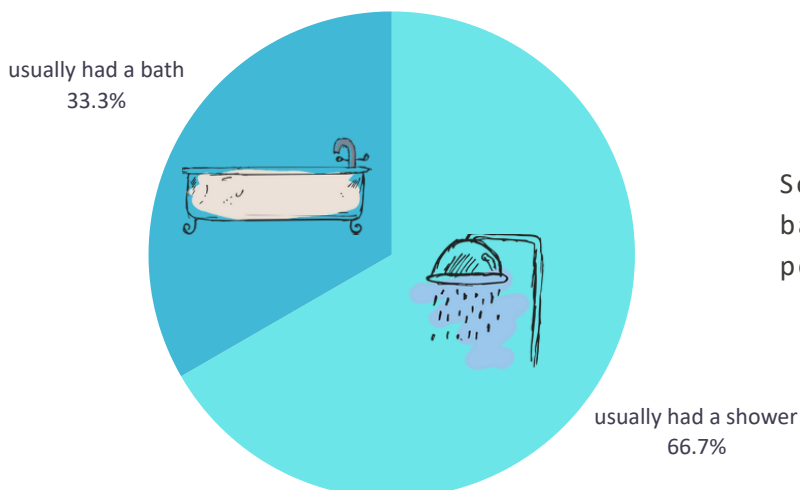
Our study involved 438 people with eczema. 218 were asked to have a bath of shower daily and 220 were asked to have a bath or shower weekly.



Ethnicity	
White British	368 (84%)
White other	13 (3%)
Black	6 (1%)
Asian	27 (6%)
Mixed	20 (5%)
Other ethnic groups	4 (1%)



Map of where people in the study lived

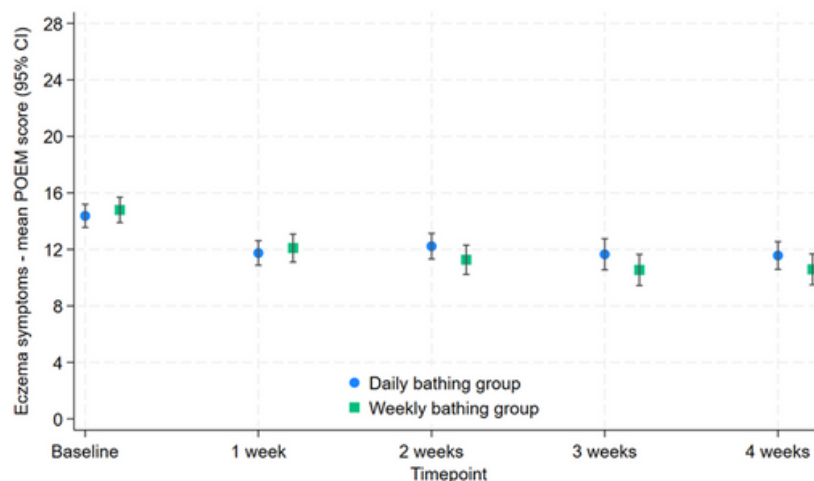


Some people had strong views about how bathing affected their eczema, but most people were unsure what was best.

## WHAT DID THE STUDY FIND OUT?

**Overall, we found that it made no difference to eczema symptoms if people had a bath or showered weekly or daily.**

We measured eczema symptoms during the study using a questionnaire called the Patient-Oriented Eczema Measure (POEM). This contains 7 questions about eczema symptoms. A higher POEM score means worse eczema symptoms.



The graph shows the average POEM score for each group. The scores are similar between the groups and any differences are very small.

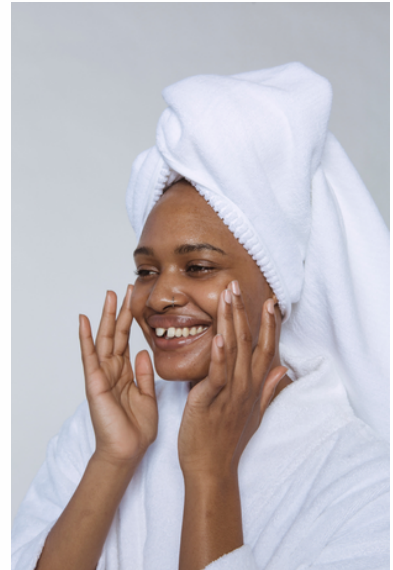
Of those bathing daily, 53% showed an improvement in their eczema after 4 weeks. For those bathing weekly, 57% showed an improvement. This small difference between the two groups is probably by chance.

**This is great news for people living with eczema - it means that you can do whatever suits you.**

Some people find bathing impacts their eczema. Others don't. There is no one answer for everyone with eczema. It is okay to do what helps you feel your best.

## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT THE RESULTS

"These results give me the freedom to choose how often I bathe." - Adult with eczema



"I'll now be telling my patients that they should do whatever suits them - there is no need to stick to a set bathing routine in the hope that it will improve the eczema." - Dermatologist

"One of my children loves bath time, the other one fights it. Knowing that we can choose what to do for each of them, without impacting their eczema is really reassuring." - Parent of children with eczema



## Other things the study looked at

We were interested to see if the results were different for different groups of people.

We looked at people who kept to the bathing recommendations for the full 4 weeks, compared to those who were not able to. We also looked to see if the effects were different for people who usually have a bath compared to those who usually have a shower.

For different ages of people – we compared children (ages 1 to 15 years), adults (16 to 55 years) and older adults (56 and older).

For all of these groups – the results were the same – it didn't seem to matter how often people had a bath or shower, as it didn't have a big impact on eczema symptoms.

However, the results weren't so clear for people aged 56 years and older. So, this might be worth looking at in future studies. It is possible that as people get older and start to lose the natural oils in the skin, then the impact of frequent bathing might have more of an effect.

## A huge thank you to all of the people who took part



The volunteers who took part in this study really tried hard to follow the study instructions. Most people had a bath or shower as they were asked to do. They also provided lots of information in the weekly questionnaires.

Lots of people also said that they enjoyed being a part of this study.

*"I've enjoyed it because it's good to be part of something that you experience yourself and to hopefully further develop ways and means of dealing with eczema"*



## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

This study was only possible because of the dedication and enthusiasm of everyone in our eczema research community.

Please do share these results with your family, friends and healthcare professionals. We want as many people as possible to hear from these findings. We have also produced a short [video](#) that you can share.

Now, “how often to have a bath or shower” is one less thing for people with eczema to worry about. You can focus on other areas of eczema care that could make more of a difference.

We have updated the guidance available in [Eczema Care Online](#) to include these results.



[QR Code for Eczema Care Online](#)

The Eczema Bathing Study is the first trial to be completed through the Rapid Eczema Trials project.

We have new studies in development and will be looking for people to take part soon. Do sign up for our monthly newsletters to receive updates about how to get involved.



### Coming soon:

- Photo assessment study
- Keep control of eczema study
- Living well with eczema study

See the Rapid Eczema Trials website for details:  
[RapidEczemaTrials.org](http://RapidEczemaTrials.org)



[QR Code for Rapid Eczema Trials](#)

This project is funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) under its Programme Grants for Applied Research programme (PGfAR NIHR203279).

The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of the NIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.