

Skin Infections

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Assessment: the not to be missed

- Systemically unwell
- <3 months of age
- Immunocompromised,
- Swelling and redness around a joint,
- Swelling or redness around eyes,
- Extensive erythema/cellulitis
- Fever
- Eczema herpeticum

Eczema herpeticum- An emergency



Treatment of skin infections

Abx rarely required	Topical abx may be considered	Oral abx (not topical):
Furuncles Carbuncles- multiheaded lesions -usually I+D enough	Impetigo- <5cm ² Infected eczema- small localised patches	Infected wounds including Bites Cellulitis Widespread impetigo/infected eczema

Fusidic Acid and Mupirocin

Topical if area of infection less than 5cm²

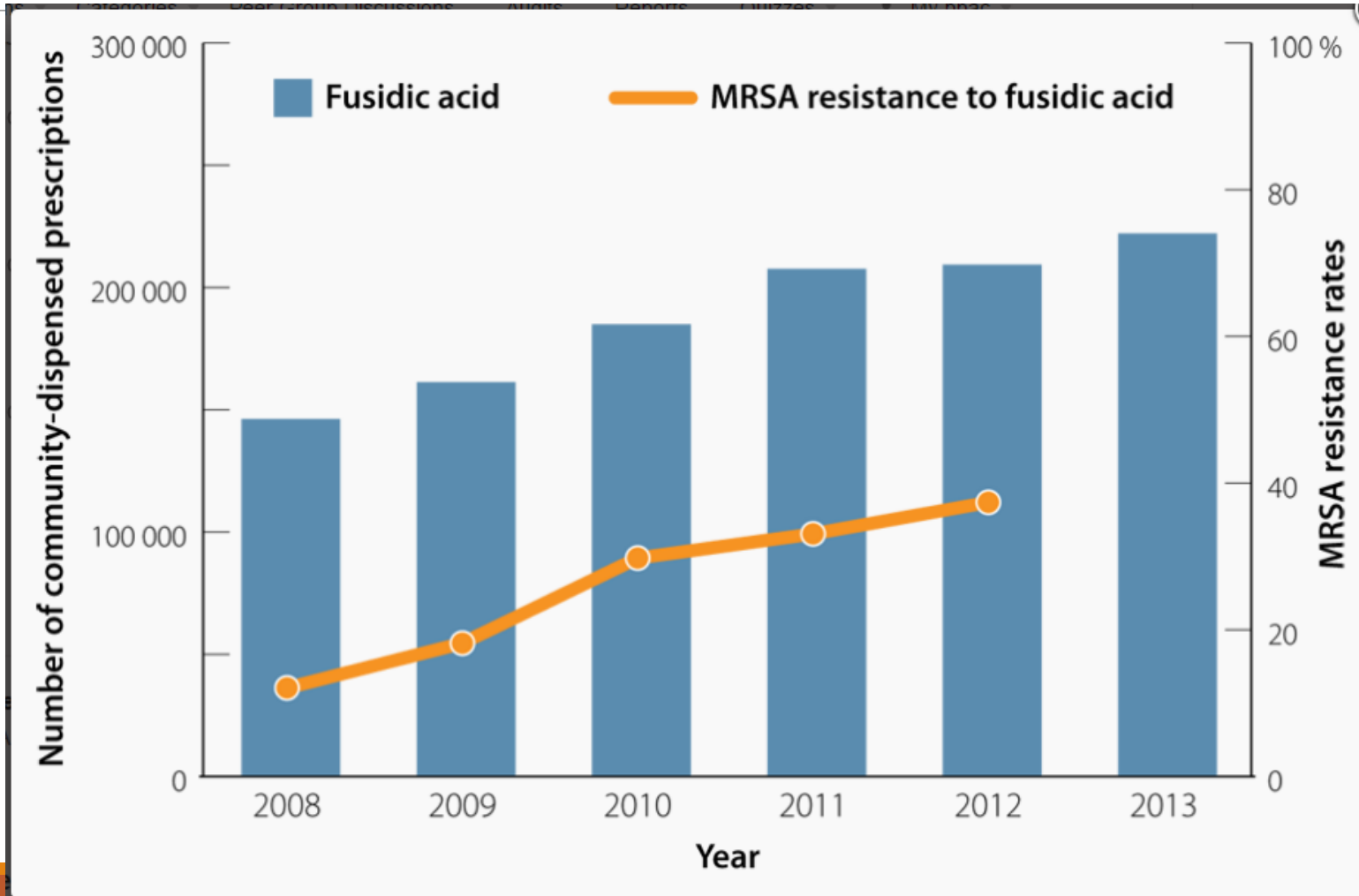
Can swab for culture and sensitivity so if orals needed more information

Bactroban (mupirocin)- only if fusidic acid resistance

How to use fusidic acid:

- Remove crusted areas on lesions with warm water and soft clean cloth
- Apply foban to lesions three times per day for seven days
- Less often if covered lesion

MRSA resistance to Fusidic Acid:



Oral treatment

- Indicate in more extensive skin infections
- Flucloxacillin if can tolerate tablets
 - 500mg QID
- Cephalexin if need liquid
 - Usually 20mg/kg/dose BD
- Cotrimoxazole if MRSA
- Erythromycin if penicillin allergy

Preventing skin infections in eczema:

Prevention is better than cure, so educate patients about the importance of good hygiene and keeping their skin healthy

Preventing skin infections in eczema:

Dry skin need emollients

Avoid soaps

Pump bottles for creams to prevent contamination

Fingernail management

One face cloth/towel per person

Hand hygiene and Linen hygiene

All skin injuries should be cleaned and covered

Don't share baths or un treated swimming pools if open skin

Avoid scratching!

Decolonisation

Bleach baths or antiseptic washes should also be used: aids in reducing bacterial load.

- Immerse in bath for 10-15 minutes then rinse with fresh water.
- Bleach bath handout
- Less irritating or drying than chlorhexidine or triclosan oils

Indications for nasal swabbing → recurrent impetigo, cellulitis or furuncles/boils.

Swab → fusidic acid if sens, otherwise mupirocin, only after active infection has resolved.

Available from
Healthpoint
pathways and
Starship website



Bleach bath instructions

Dilute bleach (sodium hypochlorite) baths can improve eczema and prevent skin infection.

Use **dilute** bleach baths twice a week for everyone when there is skin infection in a household.

1 Choose the right bleach

The bleach should be plain, without added fragrance or detergent. Budget Household Bleach Regular (2.2%) is recommended. Bleach gets weaker with time so you may need to get a fresh bottle. **Make sure you store the bleach where children cannot reach it.**

2 Fill your bath or tub with warm water

A full-sized bath filled 10cm deep holds about 80 litres of water. A baby's bath holds around 15 litres of water. You can work out how much water is in your bath by filling it to a mark using a bucket or large bottle.

3 Add bleach and mix well

Add 2 ml of 2.2 % Budget Bleach for every 1 litre of water (this will make a 0.005% solution). Other brands of bleach may be a different strength – check the bottle. A 10cm deep full-sized bath will need half a cup (150ml) of 2.2% Budget Bleach.

4 Soak in the bath for 10–15 minutes

5 Rinse off with tap water

Pat skin dry with a towel. Do not share towels. Apply steroid and moisturiser creams.

6 Use **dilute** bleach baths 2 times a week

See your doctor or nurse if skin is irritated by the bath, or if infection occurs.

The information was correct at time of writing, but commercial bleach products may change. See your doctor if you have any concerns.

Conclusions

In the year 2007 the direct cost of hospitalization due to skin infections in New Zealand children was estimated at NZ\$15million

(O'Sullivan, Baker & Zhang, 2011)

Skin infection rates are increasing

Maori, Pacific and those with low SES (O'Sullivan, Baker & Zhang, 2011)

Prevention as important in eczema management as treatment

Importance of appropriate treatment

References:

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