

Atopic Dermatitis

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Atopic Dermatitis

Atopic dermatitis is a common chronic inflammatory skin condition that usually begins and ends in childhood but may persist into adulthood. It is also referred to as atopic eczema. Atopic diseases are genetically determined. You are more likely to have atopic dermatitis if you or other family members have ever had asthma, hay fever, and/or food allergies.



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People with atopic dermatitis tend to have dry, itchy and easily irritated skin. In infants and small children, the rash is often present on the skin around the knees and elbows and the cheeks. In older children and adults, the rash is often present in the creases of the wrists, elbows, knees or ankles and/or the face or neck.

The most common symptom of atopic dermatitis is itchy skin. It is not known why the skin feels itchy. Scratching or rubbing leads to even itchier skin. This is referred to as the inch-scratch cycle. Over time this may cause thickening of the skin.

Many things can make the itch and the rash of atopic dermatitis worse. These may be different for each person. Irritants, extremes of temperature and humidity, allergies, emotions and stress can worsen the itching and rash. Infections of the skin can also be a problem. Some common food allergies associated with atopic dermatitis include milk, eggs, peanut, wheat, nuts, soy and seafood.

Allergies can trigger or worsen your atopic dermatitis symptoms. Common causes of allergy are dust mites, animals, cockroaches, pollens, molds and foods. Your physician may recommend allergy testing and/or food challenges to see if allergies are a cause. Allergy testing may include skin testing, blood tests or patch tests. Environmental control, food avoidance, and allergy shots may be recommended by your physician.

Dry skin makes the itching and rash of atopic dermatitis worse. The most important treatment for dry skin is to put water back in it. The best way to do that is to soak in a bath or shower. Gently pat dry, leaving skin damp. Apply a thick layer of moisturizer right away to seal the water in your skin.

Actions you may take to control atopic dermatitis:

- Keep finger nails very short, smooth and clean to prevent damage from scratching
- Wash all new clothes before wearing. Formaldehyde and other irritative chemicals are present in new clothing.
- Wear cotton or cotton-blend clothing that may be less irritating than other fabrics. Remove labels if they bother you. Avoid wool and other irritating fabrics.
- Use fragrance-free, dye-free liquid detergent if laundry detergent is irritating you. A second rinsing may help you remove residual laundry detergent.
- Avoid sunburn. Use a sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher. If your sunscreen is irritating, try different products or sunscreens made for the face.
- Shower or bathe after swimming or using a hot tub. Use a mild cleanser to remove chemicals and apply moisturizer liberally.
- Keep your surroundings at a comfortable temperature and humidity
- Wear loose fitting clothing during hot weather and exercise
- Soak in the bathtub or shower each day. Use warm water and stay in for 15-20 minutes. Use gentle skin cleanser and avoid scrubbing.
- Gently pat excess water away and immediately apply the recommended medicine or moisturizer to damp skin
- Talk to your physician about appropriate cleansers, moisturizers, and other medicines that control skin inflammation, itching and infection of the skin.

5 Star!

Dr Richard Mayse
& all the staff are
exceptional!

— *Janice Raver*

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