



ATOPIC DERMATITIS (ECZEMA)

Atopic dermatitis (eczema) is a chronic or recurrent immune-mediated inflammation of the skin arising from an interaction between genetic and environmental factors. Atopic dermatitis usually begins in the first few years of life and is often the initial indication that a child may later develop asthma and/or allergic rhinitis (hay fever).



Symptoms of atopic dermatitis (eczema) include:

- Patches of skin that are red or brownish
- Itchy skin, especially at night
- Dry cracked or scaly skin



In infants, eczema usually appears as tiny bumps on the cheeks. Older children and adults often experience rashes on the knees or elbows (often in the folds of the joints), on the backs of hands or on the scalp.

Diagnosis is by history and examination. Treatment typically involves avoidance of allergic and irritant triggers, the use of moisturizers, antihistamines, topical corticosteroids or immune modulators and sometimes ultraviolet (UV) therapy.

Childhood atopic dermatitis frequently resolves or lessens significantly by adulthood. Girls and patients with severe disease, early age of onset, family history, and associated rhinitis or asthma are more likely to have prolonged eczema.

Common Eczema Triggers ⁷	
<p>Irritants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Soaps, detergents ❖ Disinfectants (chlorine) ❖ Contact with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Juices from fresh fruits, meats, vegetables ➢ Chemicals, fumes on the job 	<p>Allergens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ House dust mites ❖ Pets (cats > dogs) ❖ Pollens (seasonal) ❖ Molds ❖ Dandruff
<p>Microbes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Certain bacteria (<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>) ❖ Viruses ❖ Certain fungi 	<p>Others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Hot or cold temperatures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Heat ➢ Humidity ➢ Perspiration from exercising ❖ Foods ❖ Stress ❖ Hormones

Ways to Minimize Eczema

- Avoidance of over-bathing and using washcloths (rubbing/scrubbing)
- Using warm, not hot water to bathe and a mild unscented soap or oil
- Applying moisturizer frequently, especially after bathing
- Using cool compresses to help control the itch/scratch cycle
- Avoiding foods that cause allergic reactions
- Avoiding or limiting contact with other known irritants like soaps, perfumes, detergents, jewelry, etc
- Wearing loose fitting clothing (cotton may be less irritating than wool or synthetic fibers)



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For more information visit:

Allergy/Asthma Information Association

http://aaia.ca/en/atopic_dermatitis.htm

The Eczema Society of Canada

<http://www.eczemahelp.ca/>

Merck Manuals

http://www.merckmanuals.com/professional/dermatologic_disorders/dermatitis/atopic_dermatitis_eczema.html