

Dermatitis

Atopic Dermatitis (Eczema)

Atopic dermatitis is a chronic, itchy skin disorder. It is often called “the itch that rashes”. A proper diagnosis of this condition is important, because dermatitis in general is a very common condition, and there is a lot of overlap with other skin conditions sometimes also called “eczema”.

Managing eczema

The skin is usually dry and irritated. Conservative moisturizing measures are often helpful. Your doctor will discuss this with you. Some helpful tips are:

- Avoid environmental factors that trigger your allergies
- Avoid sudden changes in temperature or humidity
- Avoid sweating or overheating
- Avoid irritants (tobacco smoke, pollution)
- Reduce stress
- Keep your fingernails short so you don't damage your skin. In fact, don't scratch!
- Avoid irritants on the skin, for example harsh soaps and fragrances. As a general rule, fragrance-free products are much better tolerated by sensitive skin.

Medicated skin creams are available, and it is important that these are used properly. Typically, they are needed much more intensively initially, and then they can be tapered off after the condition settles down.