



Causes, Prevention and Diagnosis of Atopic Dermatitis

Steve Murphy *

Department of Dermatology, Shree Krishna Hospital, Gujarat, India

DESCRIPTION

Atopic Dermatitis (AD) is the most common type of eczema, a condition of the skin that causes itching and usually leaves red spots on the face, arms, and legs. It is most common in children, but it also affects an estimated 18 million adults. The rash tends to burn and disappear, but then comes back.

Atopic dermatitis (eczema) is a condition in which the skin is red and itchy. This is common in children, but can occur at any age. Atopic dermatitis is long-lasting (chronic) and tends to recur on a regular basis, may be accompanied by asthma and hay fever. AD often begins in childhood and tends to relapse on a regular basis. During flare-ups, people with AD often scratch the affected area. This scratch can cause further skin irritation and exacerbate the symptoms.

CAUSES

Topic dermatitis is due to a reaction in the skin. The reaction leads to ongoing itching, swelling and redness. People with atopic dermatitis may be more sensitive because their skin lacks specific proteins that maintain the skin's barrier to water. Atopic dermatitis is most common in infants. It may start as early as age 2 to 6 months. Many grow beyond that in early adulthood. People with atopic dermatitis often suffer from asthma and seasonal allergies. Allergies such as asthma, hay fever and eczema are common in families. People with atopic dermatitis often test positive for allergic skin.

COMPLICATIONS

Chronic itchy, scaly skin

A skin condition called eczema (Lichen simplex chronicus) begins with an itchy skin patch. They scratch the area, which makes it even more itchy. At some point, you may get out of your habit. This condition can cause the affected skin to become discolored, thick and leathery.

Skin infections

Repeated scratches that hurt the skin can cause open pain and cracks. These increase the risk of infection by bacteria and viruses, including herpes simplex virus.

Irritant hand dermatitis

This especially affects people that require frequent wet hands and exposure to harsh soaps, detergents and disinfectants.

PREVENTION

Moisturize your skin twice a day. Lotions in cream, ointment and moisture, select a product that works well for you. The use of petroleum jellies on your baby's skin helps prevent the onset of atopic dermatitis. Do not identify conditions. Sweat, stress, obesity, soaps, detergents, dust and pollen can exacerbate skin reactions, reduce exposure to triggers.

Infants and children may experience flares from eating certain foods, including eggs, milk, soy and wheat. Talk with your child's doctor about identifying potential food allergies.

Take shorter baths or showers. Limit your baths and showers to 10 to 15 minutes, use warm, rather than hot, and water.

Take a bleach bath. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends considering a bleach bath to help prevent flares. A diluted-bleach bath decreases bacteria on the skin and related infections. Add 1/2 cup (118 ml) of household bleach, not concentrated bleach, to a 40-gallon (151 lt) bathtub filled with warm water. Measures are for a U.S.-standard-sized tub filled to the over flow drainage holes.

Soak from the neck down or just the affected areas of skin for about 10 minutes. Do not submerge the head, take a bleach bath no more than twice a week.

Use only gentle soaps. Choose mild soaps and deodorant soaps and antibacterial soaps can remove more natural oils and dry your skin.

Correspondence to: Steve murphy, Department of Dermatology, Shree Krishna Hospital, Gujarat, India, Email: steve.murphy@gmail.com

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Dry yourself carefully. After bathing gently pat your skin dry with a soft towel and apply moisturizer while your skin is still damp.

ATOPIC DERMATITIS DIAGNOSIS

A skin patch allergy test can help you and your doctor know if your rash is caused by an allergy to what you touch. Wear a skin

patch that contains a small amount of potential allergies for several days. Approximately two days after removing the patch, the doctor will check for a rash around the patch. Find out more about how to diagnose atopic dermatitis.