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ORIGIN OF ATOPIC DERMATITIS, THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHODS OF TREATMENT

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Annotation: Atopic dermatitis is a chronic condition that causes itchy skin that gets dry and scaly. It tends to come and go and may only be in childhood or may affect you your entire life. In people with light-colored skin, atopic dermatitis looks like red rashes. People with darker skin may develop brown, purple or gray rashes.

Key words: Atopic dermatitis, contact dermatitis, AMAB,

Atopic dermatitis is most common in children, but it can occur at any age. The condition affects people assigned male at birth (AMAB) and people assigned female at birth (AFAB) in equal numbers. Black people are slightly more likely to develop the condition compared to white people. Of all the people affected by atopic dermatitis, 65% develop the condition within the first year of life, while 90% develop the condition before age 5.

The condition is quite common. Approximately 1 out of every 10 babies and young children develops symptoms of atopic dermatitis. Almost two-thirds of those affected continue to have flare-ups on into adulthood.

It's common for atopic dermatitis to develop in areas where the skin bends or flexes, like behind your knees or on the inside of your elbow. But it can occur anywhere, including your:

- Hands and fingers.
- Feet and toes.
- Arms.
- Legs.
- Eyelids.
- Lips.

Atopic dermatitis is multifactorial, meaning there isn't just one cause, but many possible causes. It happens when your skin's barrier function gets damaged. This results in skin that's more sensitive and vulnerable to irritants, allergens and other environmental factors. When you come into contact with an irritant or allergen that triggers symptoms, it's called contact dermatit .

Contact dermatitis is a rash on your skin that develops when you come into contact with something you're allergic to or something that irritated your skin. The rash can swell and be itchy and uncomfortable. Avoiding what caused your rash helps prevent it from returning.

Contact dermatitis is your skin's reaction to something in your environment that causes an itchy rash. "Dermatitis" is the medical term for skin irritation or swelling (inflammation). You get contact dermatitis by coming into contact with a substance, organism, object or chemical that's irritating to your skin.

Many food allergens can trigger atopic dermatitis. Some of the most common include peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, soy, cow's milk, wheat, shellfish and seafood.

There are several medications and therapies that can help manage atopic dermatitis symptoms. These include:

• Topical steroid creams. Corticosteroid creams or ointments keep itching under control and help repair your skin. You should use them exactly as directed, as overuse can cause unpleasant side effects like thinning skin or loss of pigment.

Corticosteroids are man-made drugs that closely resemble cortisol, a hormone that your adrenal glands produce naturally. Corticosteroids are often referred to by the shortened term "steroids." Corticosteroids are different from the male hormone-related steroid compounds that some athletes abuse.

• Oral steroids. In severe cases, your healthcare provider may prescribe prednisone or other oral corticosteroids to help control inflammation. Follow all instructions. These drugs are only used short-term due to potential side effects, such as high blood sugar, glaucoma, slowed growth in kids and slower wound healing.

PREDNISONE (PRED ni sone) treats many conditions such as asthma, allergic reactions, arthritis, inflammatory bowel diseases, adrenal, and blood or bone marrow disorders. It works by decreasing inflammation, slowing down an overactive immune system, or replacing cortisol normally made in the body. Cortisol is a hormone that plays an important role in how the body responds to stress, illness, and injury. It belongs to a group of medications called steroids.

This medicine may be used for other purposes; ask your health care provider or pharmacist if you have questions.

COMMON BRAND NAME(S): Deltasone, Predone, Sterapred, Sterapred DS

• Dupilumab (Dupixent). This new, FDA-approved injectable medication can treat people with severe atopic dermatitis who haven’t had success with other treatment options.

DUPILUMAB (doo PIL ue mab) treats some types of skin conditions, such as eczema. It may also be used to treat conditions that cause inflammation in the sinuses and esophagus. It can be used to prevent the symptoms of asthma. It works by decreasing inflammation. Do not use it to treat a sudden asthma attack.

This medicine may be used for other purposes; ask your health care provider or pharmacist if you have questions.

• Antibiotics, antivirals or antifungals. If atopic dermatitis becomes infected, your healthcare provider will prescribe these medications to eliminate infection and relieve your symptoms.

Antibiotics are medications that fight bacterial infections. They don’t work against viral infections like cold or flu.

Bacteria are microscopic germs that live inside your body, on your skin and all around you. Most types of bacteria won’t hurt you. Some types (like some in your gut or on your skin) help keep you healthy. But certain bacteria can make you sick, with the effects ranging from a mild infection to a severe one that lands you in the hospital.

That’s why antibiotics are so important. They can help you feel better and are often lifesaving. But when it comes to antibiotics, it’s possible to have too much of a good thing. Using

antibiotics when they're not needed — like for viral infections or mild bacterial infections that would go away on their own — can lead to unnecessary side effects and contribute to the global problem of antibiotic resistance.

Most people need antibiotics at some point during their lives, and probably many times. You can reap the benefits of antibiotics by following your healthcare provider's instructions on when you need them and how to use them. You can also learn how these medications work and what they treat. This knowledge can empower you to understand what's going on inside your body and how to play an active role in your treatment.

• Wet dressings. This intensive approach involves applying steroid creams, then wrapping the skin with wet bandages. If you have a severe flare-up, a provider may perform this treatment in a hospital setting.

• Light therapy. People who have severe flare-ups after traditional treatments often benefit from light therapy. During this treatment, your provider will use controlled amounts of ultraviolet rays on your skin. This type of therapy isn't recommended long-term, as it can eventually increase your risk for skin cancer and premature aging.

Skin cancer is a disease that involves the growth of abnormal cells in your skin tissues. Normally, as skin cells grow old and die, new cells form to replace them. When this process doesn't work as it should — like after exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun — cells grow more quickly. These cells may be noncancerous (benign), which don't spread or cause harm. Or they may be cancerous.

Skin cancer can spread to nearby tissue or other areas in your body if it's not caught early. Fortunately, if skin cancer is identified and treated in early stages, most are cured. So, it's important to talk with your healthcare provider if you think you have any signs of skin cancer.

Children will sometimes outgrow atopic dermatitis, or have flares that are less severe over time. Though atopic dermatitis isn't curable, it's manageable with the right treatments. Most people can reduce their symptoms by using moisturizing creams at least twice daily. Even if you're diligent in your skincare routines, you can still experience flare-ups. Therefore, it's important to know how to manage your symptoms when they come back.

Atopic dermatitis won't go away completely. But once you find ways to properly manage your symptoms, your flare-ups likely won't be as severe. People with atopic dermatitis should check in with their healthcare provider regularly, depending on the frequency of flares, to ensure they're using the best treatments available.

You should call your healthcare provider if your condition causes pain or discomfort, or if it keeps you from sleeping or functioning normally. If your rash begins to weep, or if you develop raised, fluid-filled bumps, schedule an appointment with your provider.

A note from Cleveland Clinic

While atopic dermatitis isn't typically dangerous, it can wreak havoc on your comfort and quality of life. Fortunately, there are several treatments available to help keep your symptoms in check. Most people experience a dramatic improvement once they find a skincare regimen that works for them.

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