

Atopic dermatitis

Atopic dermatitis is an inflammatory, chronic, and recurrent skin condition. It affects around 20% of children up to the age of 6. In many cases, it eventually disappears, but it persists in 2-5% of adults. The skin is dry, red, and scaly. It can be very itchy, leading to scratching. It improves at certain times of the year compared to others. It is a benign and non-contagious condition. In moderate and severe forms, it can reduce quality of life and have psychological repercussions.

What can we do?

1. Moisturize the skin daily

This is the basis of treatment for atopic dermatitis. A rich, fragrance-free cream should be used. Avoid products containing alcohol, perfumes, preservatives, or irritants.



In the shower: use warm water and stay under the water for a short time. Soaps and shampoos should be very mild, not increase skin dryness, contain oat-based ingredients, and be free of perfumes and preservatives. These are known as “soap-free soaps” or *syndets* (“synthetic detergents”). Dry yourself without rubbing your skin. It is important to apply cream as soon as possible after showering or bathing, while the water is still on your skin, and to repeat the application as often as necessary.

2. To prevent new outbreaks and avoid irritating the skin

Clothing: wash it with non-irritating soaps and rinse it thoroughly. Do not use bleach or fabric softeners.

Wear cotton underwear. Avoid wool, synthetic fabrics, and tight clothing. Do not overdress (heat makes the situation worse).

Avoid: anything you are allergic to; stress; environments that are too cold or too hot, and humidity; and irritating products, such as cleaning products (use cotton gloves and, over them, rubber or plastic gloves).

It is recommended to avoid scratching the lesions, as they can become infected. Keep your nails short and clean to avoid injury when scratching. If you find that you scratch while sleeping, sleep with cotton gloves on.

Exercise regularly (remember to moisturize well after showering or swimming).

Protect yourself from the sun (sunscreen with a minimum SPF of 30, hats, sunglasses, etc.), especially if you are undergoing topical treatment. Sunscreen is not a substitute for necessary daily moisturizing.



3. Treatment in case of an outbreak

Consult your primary care center in case of an outbreak or skin infection (red, hot, with pus, or fever).

Topical treatment: the most important thing is to perform **daily treatments** as directed. The **texture of the treatment** that best suits each person is chosen to encourage continuity:

Gel: fast-absorbing; not visible on the skin; does not stain clothing, and is ideal for the scalp.

Ointments and creams: for small areas of skin that need more hydration.

Treatment shampoos: to clean the hair and scalp.