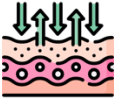


What is atopic dermatitis?

Altered skin

Having atopic dermatitis (eczema) means having **weakened skin that can no longer perform its barrier function properly.**

It translates into 2 skin problems:



Weakened protection

My skin will let elements in/out more easily



Aggravated reaction

My skin will inflame more easily

A major pathology

Dry skin may experience inflammatory flare-ups (patches, redness, oozing, itching).

These eczema attacks can have **indirect consequences** (sleep problems, changes in social behaviour, psychological difficulties, reduced quality of life).

The disease is **chronic** (it is a long-term illness, with effects that may persist over time).

It is a common dermatological problem (estimated to affect 1-7% of the world's population).

A multifactorial problem

The causes of atopic dermatitis are complex (genetic factors, atopic terrain and environmental factors) and its mechanisms are still not very well understood!

Advances in research into this disease are very recent, and better medical treatment is possible in the future.

A disease not to be neglected

In the end, what I've learnt is that my atopic dermatitis is an illness that can have an indirect impact on my life, and that it can evolve over time: being able to **be monitored over the long term** is therefore essential!

It's important to find competent healthcare professionals with whom I feel comfortable communicating.



Living with atopic dermatitis

Anticipating crises

My environment can expose me to triggering or aggravating factors. These factors can vary from case to case!

Some common examples are :

- The climate
- Sweat
- Irritating clothing (wool type)
- Stress



Preventive measures

Here are a few tips to help you avoid triggering or aggravating factors in your daily life:



Favour cool, well-ventilated areas

Wash quickly with lukewarm water and pat dry



Wear light clothing (cotton-type)

Stay well hydrated (use emollients and drink water)



Points to watch

It is important to consult my dermatologist if I notice the following symptoms:

- A change in the appearance of my lesions
- The appearance of another skin problem

Available resources

- **Better understand my condition:** the British Association of Dermatologists (a professional society) runs an information website for the general public, including a dedicated section on atopic dermatitis (<https://www.bad.org.uk/patient-information-leaflets/atopic-eczema>)
- **Patient associations:** There are a number of local groups that provide support tailored to people living with atopic dermatitis. In the UK, **Eczema Outreach Support** (<https://www.eczema.org>) is a key patient organisation that offers resources, advice, and runs events across the country to help those affected by eczema and atopic dermatitis
- **Psychological support:** atopic dermatitis is a visible disease that can be difficult to live with on a daily basis. Some form of psychological support can be very beneficial. The paramedical team in the hospital's dermatology department can offer psychological support or refer patients, I can talk about this to my dermatologist or other healthcare staff!

Undesirable effects to consider

My priority: to get rid of the lesions and the itching



I may prefer oral immunosuppressants...

Beware of liver disease (hepatitis), haematological problems (anaemia), nausea, abdominal pain and fatigue.

... or topical immunomodulators.

Beware of the irritant effect (burning, itching) and possible intolerance to alcohol (hot flushes).



My priority: fewer side effects



I can opt for phototherapy...

Watch out for hyperpigmentation, sensations of heat, redness, dry skin and even sunburn.

... or topical corticoids.

Watch out for weakened skin, stretch marks and hypopigmentation.



My priority: to stabilise eczema over the long term



I can favour biological therapies...

Beware of eye problems (conjunctivitis), joint pain, infections (herpes), haematological disorders (hypereosinophilia) and the appearance of other skin problems.

...or the anti-JAK treatment.

Beware of respiratory problems (bronchitis, rhinitis), infections (herpes), headaches and other skin problems (acne).



These treatments can have a range of side effects, which vary in frequency and are not fully detailed here. **They MUST be discussed with a healthcare professional.**

For comprehensive information on possible side effects, patients can refer to the **Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)** website (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/medicines-and-healthcare-products-regulatory-agency>) or the **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)** guidance (<https://www.nice.org.uk/>).

