

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON HEALTH CENTER

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ATOPIC DERMATITIS

Atopic Dermatitis is a chronic inflammatory disease of the skin that is often associated with other allergic disorders, such as asthma or hay fever. The basic causes are unknown, but are probably inherited, and likely related to the immune system of the body. Associated conditions include: hay fever, asthma, urticarial stress rashes, itching during stressful periods; irritating clothes and chemicals; or use of immunosuppressive drugs.

The most frequent signs and symptoms include itching rash in areas where heat and moisture are retained such as skin creases of elbows, knees, neck, face, hands, feet, groin, genitals, and around the anus. The skin in the affected areas is usually dry and thickened, and is accompanied by uncontrolled scratching (frequently unconscious). Chronic fatigue from loss of sleep due to the severe itching is the rule rather than the exception.

Diagnosis is usually made by physical findings. Effective treatment involves eliminating allergens, avoiding irritants and other precipitating factors and relieving itching and inflammation. Use cool-water soaks for crusting, oozing. Bathe in cool to tepid water with cleansing agents other than soap. Use non-prescription topical steroids or coal-tar preparations. Antihistamines are frequently helpful, and antibiotics may be necessary if secondary infection occurs. Avoid prolonged exposure to heat.

Secondary bacterial infections are not uncommon. In addition, there appears to be an increased susceptibility to adverse drug reactions. Decreased resistance to fungal and viral infections may be seen. Herpes simplex infections are more severe in people with atopic dermatitis. Cataracts are more common in people with atopic dermatitis, for obscure reasons.

Finally, if you suffer from atopic dermatitis, be sure to visit us at the Health Center

We at the Health Center will be happy to help you.



Healthfully yours,

Dr. Healthberry

For questions or comments you can;

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