



Dermatitis



Canadian Skin Patient Alliance
Alliance canadienne des patients en dermatologie



What is Atopic Dermatitis?

Atopic Dermatitis (AD) is a chronic, inflammatory skin condition with symptoms ranging from dry, itchy skin to repeated flares of oozing, crusted rashes.

How common is AD?

AD affects up to 17% of Canadians, including both children and adults.

What does AD look like?

Initial symptoms of AD may include itchy, scaly and inflamed skin. It commonly affects the area behind the knees, on the inside of the elbows, and on the face, neck, feet and hands.

How do I know if I have AD?

AD is very common and is often diagnosed quickly by a family physician, pediatrician or dermatologist.

Classifications of AD

Severity is defined by frequency of itching, amount of skin affected and presence of skin thickening and cracking.

AD can be classified into:

Mild (45% of patients)

- ✓ Small areas of dry skin
- ✓ Some itching
- ✓ May also have small areas of redness

Moderate (45% of patients)

- ✓ Medium-sized areas of dry skin
- ✓ Frequent itching
- ✓ Redness
- ✓ Affected area(s) may also appear cracked, broken or thickened

“ The toughest part is the itching and that it’s not always easily relieved. ”

Severe (10% of patients)

- ✓ Large areas of dry skin
- ✓ Constant itching
- ✓ Redness
- ✓ Affected area(s) may also appear cracked, broken or thickened
- ✓ Affected area(s) may also bleed and ooze
- ✓ Affected area(s) may also cause skin discoloration

What lifestyle changes can I make to reduce symptoms?

In trying to prevent flare-ups or lessen symptoms, individuals with AD can engage in numerous behavior and lifestyle changes.

These may include avoiding certain foods that they have found to trigger their symptoms, reducing stress where possible, refraining from baths or showers that are too hot and avoiding itchy, woolen clothing.

“ I choose my clothing very carefully and it sometimes limits my social activities. ”

Treatment

People with AD may have to try multiple treatments before finding relief. They often apply different creams and try other forms of skin care maintenance, as well as natural or alternative remedies.

Talk to your health care professional about what works best for you, and be sure to ask about new and emerging treatment options available in Canada.

“ It takes some time to find a treatment that works best. ”



AD and allergies

AD is often associated with an increased risk of developing asthma and allergies. In fact, seasonal allergies and food allergies are quite common among individuals with AD.

How can I learn more about what it’s like to have AD?

In November 2017, the Canadian Skin Patient Alliance conducted the Atopic Dermatitis Patient Experience (ADPE) survey, with responses from individuals with AD and as well as caregivers.

The survey revealed that the vast majority of



respondents saw their family physician first with AD symptoms and were diagnosed within a month of that first visit. The majority had tried multiple treatments, with topical corticosteroids being the most commonly used. Many found it to be effective.

Those living with moderate/severe AD reported several ways their lives were impacted, including:

- ✓ sleep deprivation
- ✓ anxiety
- ✓ intimacy issues

The ADPE survey showed that patients and caregivers primarily turn to their doctors and health websites for AD information. They want to learn more about alternative and non-medicinal remedies, as well as lifestyle and dietary changes to help control their symptoms of AD.

For more information on the ADPE Survey, please visit: www.canadianskin.ca/adreport

The Canadian Skin Patient Alliance is a national non-profit organization dedicated to advocate, educate and support Canadians living with skin diseases, conditions and traumas.

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