



ATOPIC ECZEMA – CHILDREN FACT SHEET

- + Atopic eczema affects 15–20% of UK schoolchildren.¹
- + One of the causes of the condition is thought to be hereditary.²
- + Atopic eczema and atopic dermatitis are the same thing.
- + Atopic diseases – including eczema, asthma and hay fever – are all allergic reactions to things such as house dust mites, pollens, certain foods and animal dander.
- + It is estimated that 50% of all atopic eczema cases will begin in infancy and can continue throughout childhood.³ 60-70% of atopic eczema cases will clear by early teens.⁴
- + Eczema can occur anywhere on the body and commonly affects the creases of the body such as the backs of knees and insides of elbows.
- + Skin affected by eczema can be very itchy, dry and red. Sometimes, it is weepy and bleeding, although it can vary in appearance with each child.
- + Eczema is not contagious.
- + Eczema can cause sleep problems, so affected children may be more irritable at school or need to take time off.⁵
- + Eczema during the teens is particularly difficult, because teenagers are often sensitive about their appearance. This can lead to low self-esteem and lack of confidence.⁶
- + Studying can be affected, because of lack of sleep and frequent absences.⁷
- + Stress can make eczema worse, and exam times can be particularly difficult for teenagers with eczema.⁷

¹Williams HC. Dermatology: Health Care Needs Assessment. 1997; second series: Radcliffe Medical Press

²Halken S, Host A. The Lessons of Non-Interventional and Interventional Prospective Studies on the Development of Atopic Disease During Childhood, Allergy Review 2000: 55 793-802

³Ellis C, Luger T on behalf of the ICCAD II Faculty; Abek D, Allen R, Graham-Brown RAC et al. International Consensus Conference of Atopic Dermatitis II (ICCAD II): Clinical update and current treatment strategies. British Journal of Dermatology 2003 (148) Supp 63 3-10

⁴Charman C. Clinical Evidence – Atopic Eczema. British Medical Journal 1999 (318) 1600-1604.

⁵All Party Parliamentary Group on Skin, Report on the Enquiry into the Impact of Skin Diseases on Peoples Lives, July 2003, London, 9-12

⁶All Party Parliamentary Group on Skin, Report on the Enquiry into the Impact of Skin Diseases on Peoples Lives, July 2003, London, 5

⁷Morgan J, Managing Eczema at Secondary School, Exchange Magazine: 21-23