

CHANGE THE EFFECT OF AD



There are things you can do throughout your normal day to help change the effect of AD. In fact, there are many decisions and choices that you make each day that could be contributing to flare-ups. Where are you interested in making a few small changes?

CHANGE AT HOME

Keeping your home clean is key.

A cleaning routine can help to reduce your exposure to allergens, such as dust, mold and pollen, in your home. Here are some ideas for developing your own routine, as well as some modifications you can make to your home.

Wash weekly in hot water:

- Bed sheets
- Pillowcases
- Blankets
- Area rugs and floor mats
- Curtains / roller-type shades

Cover with dust-mite-proof covers:

- Pillows
- Mattresses
- Box springs

Wipe moisture off:

- Windows
- Refrigerator
- Bathtub and shower — after each use

Replace:

- Wool or feather bedding with synthetic materials
- Carpeting with hardwood, linoleum, tile, or vinyl flooring
- Horizontal blinds with washable curtains made of plain cotton or synthetic fabric or washable roller-type shades
- Upholstered furniture with easy-to-clean leather, wood, metal or plastic furniture
- Wood-burning fireplace or stove with natural gas fireplaces
- Wallpaper in the bathroom with paint or tile
- Moldy shower curtains and bath mats
- Moldy rubber seals around refrigerator doors
- Small-particle filters in central heating and cooling systems and in room air conditioners — once a month

Vacuum weekly:

- Carpeting (if you can't replace your carpeting with hardwood or linoleum, then make sure the carpeting is at least low-pile) — and shampoo it frequently

Toss or store in plastic bins:

- Knickknacks
- Ornaments
- Books
- Magazines
- Toys
- Games
- Stuffed animals
- Potted plants (or spread aquarium gravel over the dirt to help contain mold)
- Moldy, out-of-date food
- Food waste — empty trash daily and place in a garbage can with an insect-proof lid

Scrub:

- Dishes
- Sinks
- Faucets
- The dripping pan of the refrigerator
- Cabinets
- Countertops
- Bathtub

- Shower
- Toilet

Fix:

- Plumbing leaks — check under sinks
- Potential sources of leaks in foundation, roof and ceilings
- Cracks in entry ways for insects and pests

Install:

- Vented exhaust fan above stove
- Exhaust fan in bathroom
- Dehumidifier — and clean it weekly
- Double-paned windows if you live in a cold environment

Bathe regularly:

- Pets

Extra tip:

- When you're cleaning, wear cotton-lined gloves

CHANGE AT WORK

AD can affect your job, especially if it is on your hands.

There are many jobs that have allergens and skin irritants in the workplace. Farmers, aestheticians, carpenters, cleaners, construction workers, food industry workers, hairdressers, healthcare workers, machine operators, mechanics, and many other workers are regularly exposed to products that can irritate the skin on their hands and other places on the body. Furthermore, some jobs require working outside during extreme weather, thereby causing dry skin or sweating, which can cause AD symptoms.

If you have AD and are entering the workforce in the near future, you may want to give some thought to these possible exposures and how they may affect your condition.

If you already have a job that exposes you to allergens and skin irritants, try to avoid your triggers by keeping them off your skin and clothes. This may mean asking the cleaning staff to not use their regular cleaning products on your workstation or choosing to clean your workstation yourself. If your job permits it, you could wear heavy vinyl or neoprene gloves with cotton liners inside to handle the products that irritate your skin. It may also be a good idea to bring your moisturizer with you to work to hydrate and help with dryness.



CHANGING MY DIET

Food allergens may be triggering your AD symptoms.

Certain foods can trigger flare-ups, but it is important to note that food allergies themselves do not cause eczema. There's no evidence that specific foods trigger AD symptoms, but some people notice flare-ups after eating certain foods.

Food allergens contribute to approximately 40% of AD cases in infancy, but the role of food allergens in adults is controversial. If you think a food allergen may be triggering your AD symptoms, talk to your doctor about getting tested.

Common allergenic foods

The most common allergenic foods are eggs, milk, peanuts, wheat, soy, tree nuts, shellfish and fish.

CHANGING MY SLEEP

Two-thirds of patients have their sleep disturbed due to itching.

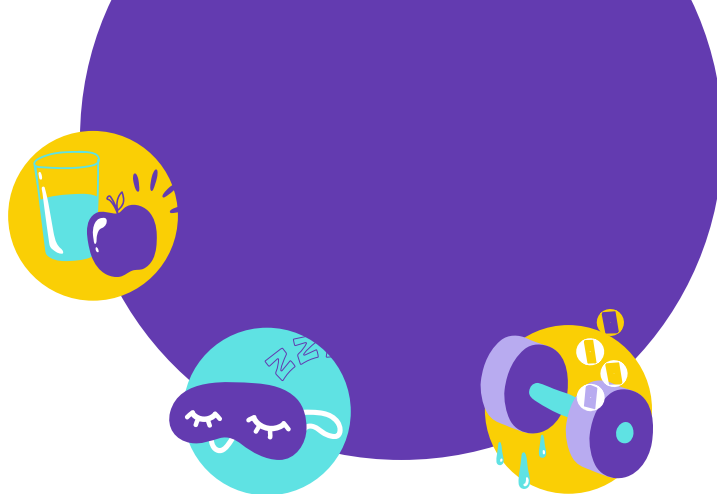
The problem may be falling asleep or staying asleep. In adults, it leads to daytime fatigue and a perception of poor overall health. Children with

CHANGING MY EXERCISE ROUTINE

Your AD doesn't have to stop you from getting exercise.

Sweat from exercising can aggravate your skin, but you can address it a few ways.

- Choose indoors: air-conditioned rooms can keep you cooler and this avoids the extra sweat you may get from exercising in the sun



Adapting your diet

Avoiding proven food allergens in AD could be beneficial, although strict dietary practices are not recommended. Dietary restrictions can lead to nutritional deficiencies in the skin, and nutrition counselling may be needed in certain cases. Before making any long-term dietary changes, talk to your doctor.

AD who have trouble with sleep have higher rates of developing attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), headaches and short stature.

Talk to your doctor for suggestions about what you can do if AD affects your sleep.

- Choose the best exercise for you: Swimming can keep you cool and is great exercise — just remember to wash the chlorine off your body after. If you're currently experiencing a flare-up, consider a gentler exercise, like yoga, which is also great for stress (another trigger for AD symptoms).

When you're done exercising, gently dab off the sweat and shower. Since hot water can dry your skin, take your shower in lukewarm or cool water. Always gently pat your skin (don't rub it with a towel) and moisturize after.

CHANGING MY CLOTHES

Cotton is your friend.

The trick with clothing is to wear loose, breathable clothing and avoid materials that can make you sweat, such as wool, polyester, nylon and rayon.

Whenever you purchase new clothing, wash them to rid of the dyes and chemicals. Washing is an opportunity to introduce new chemicals you

don't want, though, so think about using gentle detergents made for babies or sensitive skin. Never use more detergent than you need and consider rinsing the garments twice. Avoid scented products, like fabric softeners and dryer sheets.

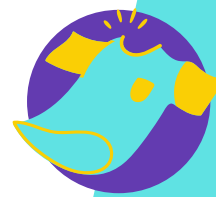
Having your clothes dry-cleaned? Take the plastic off when you get them back and air them out for 24 hours before wearing.

CHANGE WHEN I TRAVEL

If you're travelling, watch out for stress and plan well in advance.

Travel can be fun, but stressful. There is a lot to organize, but you don't want your stress to trigger a flare-up. Here are some things to consider to help you plan in advance to reduce some of that stress.

- Step up your skin care regimen a few days before you leave to lessen the impact of a flare-up
- Climate: Is your travel destination hotter than where you live? Pack the right clothes. You want loose, breathable clothing and avoid materials that can make you sweat, such as polyester, nylon and rayon. Pack some sunscreen too since sunburns inflame your skin. If you're sensitive to sunscreens, try the mineral versions with titanium dioxide or zinc oxide. Is your travel destination colder than where you live? Then dress warm, but not so warm that you'll be sweaty. Wear layers. Avoid wool and mohair, as they can be itchy. With colder weather comes dry air, so pack extra moisturizer.
- Checking your bag: Sometimes we make it to our destination before our bags! If you must check your bag, make sure to pack your essentials (like extra clothing, moisturizer, medications) in your carry on. You may be able to get a note from your doctor if you're worried about taking too much moisturizer in your carry on.



- Airplane surfaces: Bring wipes with you to wipe down your seat and tray in case there are any cleaning chemicals on them that may irritate your skin.
- Your final destination: You may want to bring your own pillows and sheets. Call your hotel in advance and ask if they have feather-free rooms and if they can use unscented products to clear your

room. If you're travelling internationally and you think it may be difficult to find specific products you'll need, ask your hotel if you can ship them in advance. If you're staying with a friend, discuss your needs in advance to give them time to prepare.

SEASONAL CHANGE

Sweaty skin or dry skin? Both cause itchiness.

There are lots of fun activities to do in the summer and winter months, but extremely hot weather can cause you to sweat and extremely cold weather can lead to dry skin — both are triggers for itching. Here are some tips you may find useful.

Summer

With the summer comes the heat. Your skin may not like getting hot and sweaty. On really hot days, it might be best to stay inside. On days when you go outside, stay in the shade and wear sunscreen. If you're sensitive to sunscreens, try the mineral versions. Wear loose, breathable clothing and avoid materials that can make you sweat, such as polyester, nylon and rayon. If you shower after a hot day, use cool water.

Winter

With the winter comes dry air. It's normal to dress warmer in the winter months, but instead of wearing really heavy clothes that might make you sweaty, try wearing layers that you can take off as needed. Avoid clothing made of wool and mohair, as these can be itchy materials. When you shower, use lukewarm water instead of hot water, if you can. When you're done showering, put lotion on right away while your skin is still damp. You may find you want to moisturize your skin more regularly in the winter months. A humidifier can help keep moisture in the air, but clean it regularly to get rid of mold.

