

Be Prepared, Be Heard

Preparing for your eczema appointment with the GP

Being prepared helps you get the eczema advice and support you need from your GP appointment. It can be hard to remember and describe everything on the day, so it's important to plan ahead. This guide is for anyone living with eczema and for parents/caregivers of children who have eczema. To get the best treatment, try and be open and honest about how eczema affects you or your child.

Feeling prepared and heard

Appointments are not very long, so focus on three key areas:

- Explain to the GP how bad your eczema is today and over the past week
- Describe what happens when your eczema flares up
- Understand how your treatment works and how to use it.

Top tips for your GP appointment

- Fill in the eczema description diary below - this will help explain how eczema affects you
- Take photos of your eczema (on your phone) when it's flaring and when your skin is clear
- Be ready to take notes during the appointment - it's difficult to remember everything afterwards
- Make sure you have a good internet connection if your appointment is virtual.

Eczema description diary

Please fill in this diary before your GP appointment. This will help you describe your eczema symptoms and their impact.

Choose one response for each question. Over the last week, how many days has:

Your skin felt dry or rough?	None / 1 or 2 days / most days / every day
Your skin been itchy?	None / 1 or 2 days / most days / every day
Your skin disturbed your sleep?	None / 1 or 2 days / most days / every day
Your skin been weeping/infected ...	None / 1 or 2 days / most days / every day
Your skin been cracked/flaking	None / 1 or 2 days / most days / every day
Your skin been bleeding	None / 1 or 2 days / most days / every day

Which areas of your body are most affected by eczema?

List whether currently flaring or not.

a. Which areas of your body are regularly affected by eczema?

b. Which areas of your body are often affected when your eczema flares up?

Has your eczema made you feel anxious about or stopped you from doing any of your usual activities?

Is your eczema getting you down and making you feel anxious? Tell your healthcare professional how you are feeling and ask what emotional well-being and mental health support services are available.

Your eczema triggers

- Have you been diagnosed with an allergy?
- Does anyone in your immediate family have eczema, asthma or hay fever?
- Have you changed your use of the following products in the last month?

☐

Soap, shampoo,
detergent

☐

Cosmetic face wash
or cleanser

☐

Make-up

☐

Moisturiser, shaving
or tanning products

Note down anything else you've noticed that triggers your eczema to flare up, e.g. seasonal change in temperature, stressful situations or household cleaning products.

Your previous medical care for eczema

Have you seen a healthcare professional during the last year about your eczema?

a. Write down the product names of the emollients you've used for your eczema here:

b. How well did these emollients work to keep your skin moist and help reduce itch?

Of the emollients you've used

a. Which do you prefer?

b. Which have not helped?

c. How much do you use per month?

Some questions to ask your GP about treatments (e.g. topical steroids)

- What is my prescription for, how strong is the medicine, how do I use it, for how long and when do I stop?
- How do I know if my medicine(s) is working?
- What should I do if the medicine isn't working and my eczema is still flaring?
- Apart from prescription medicines, what else can I do to help my eczema and avoid flares?
- What should I do if my eczema flares up again?

If you suspect you have Topical Steroid Withdrawal (TSW), please raise this with your GP.

National Eczema Society is the UK charity for everyone affected by eczema. We help support people with eczema, providing information and advice, which we deliver through our website, social media, campaigns, publications. We also provide a voice for people with eczema, raising awareness, supporting research into new treatments and campaigning for better medical care.

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