

ALLERGY & SKIN ASTHMA

Atopic Dermatitis During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

The Finnish Allergy, Skin and Asthma Federation

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Atopic Dermatitis During Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

During pregnancy, your body goes through many changes, and atopic dermatitis may be one of the things you're concerned about. Atopic dermatitis is a common skin condition, and its symptoms can vary greatly.

About 20% of people with atopic dermatitis experience improvement during pregnancy, while 50-60% experience worsening symptoms, and the rest remain unchanged. The worsening may be due to changes in the immune system, hormonal effects, pregnancy-related stress, and/or discontinuation of treatment.

With proper treatment and support, you can keep your atopic dermatitis under control while planning pregnancy, during pregnancy, and while breastfeeding.

During pregnancy, your body goes through many changes, and atopic dermatitis may be one of the things you're concerned about.

Treatment During Pregnancy

During pregnancy, it is important to keep your skin in good condition by actively taking care of it. You can still safely use basic moisturizers as well as mild, moderate, and strong corticosteroid creams. If these are not enough to keep the rash under control, or if you use more than 200 grams of moderate or strong corticosteroid creams per month, it is advisable to consult a dermatologist about other treatment options.

Tacrolimus ointment (Protopic, Tacrolimus Accord) and pimecrolimus cream (Elidel) are considered safe to use during pregnancy. However, they should only be applied to areas of skin that require treatment, and the duration of use should be limited to the shortest effective period. UVB phototherapy can also be used during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

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If standard treatments aren't enough to manage severe atopic dermatitis during pregnancy, certain medications that work throughout the body may be considered—this approach is called systemic treatment.

A dermatologist will decide whether to initiate systemic medication and will oversee your care throughout the pregnancy. If you are already on systemic medication and it keeps your atopic dermatitis well controlled, you should consult your doctor when planning a pregnancy to discuss the possibility of continuing the medication during pregnancy.

Treatment During Breastfeeding

During breastfeeding, you can continue phototherapy, corticosteroid creams, as well as tacrolimus and pimecrolimus treatments. If treatment is needed on the breast area, ensure the nursing baby doesn't come into direct contact with the medicated cream.

In practice, apply the cream to the nipple and/or areola area immediately after breastfeeding and the area should be gently but carefully cleaned before the next feeding. Some systemic medications can also be used during breastfeeding.

Family Planning Advice

It is important to inform your doctor well in advance if you are planning a pregnancy, so that together you can find a suitable medication that is safe during both pregnancy and breastfeeding. Some medications may temporarily affect the function of the egg cells, which can make it more difficult to become pregnant or increase the risk of developmental disorders in the fetus.

It's also good to know that some systemic medications can remain in the body for some time after discontinuation. Therefore, it may be necessary to wait for a doctor-recommended period before stopping contraception.

Systemic medications used for atopic dermatitis do not affect sperm quality, so men can safely continue their prescribed treatment when planning to have children.

It is important to inform your doctor well in advance if you are planning a pregnancy, so that together you can find a suitable medication that is safe during both pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Cooperation with Healthcare Professionals

It is important that dermatologists and maternity and child health clinic staff collaborate when needed to ensure you receive the best possible care. This helps make sure that all treatment options are considered, and that the safest and most effective care is found for both you and your baby.

Remember, you do not have to endure difficult symptoms during pregnancy or breastfeeding. With the right treatment and good support, you can keep your atopic dermatitis under control and focus on enjoying this special time in your life.

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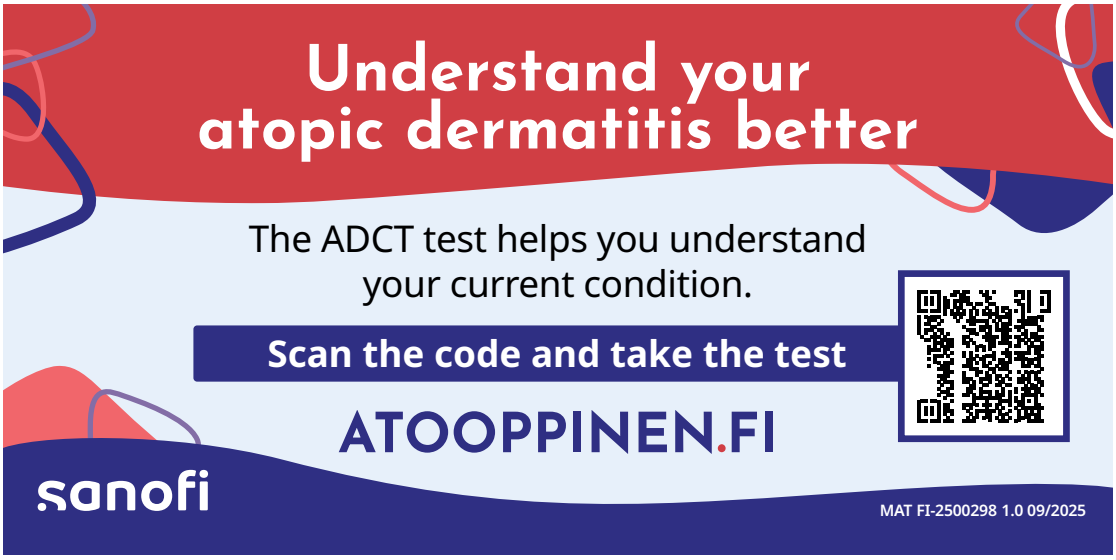
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