



# Family Education Sheet



## The Atopic Dermatitis Center

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### *What is the Atopic Dermatitis Center at Children's Hospital Boston?*

- The Center, under the direction of Lynda Schneider, M.D., was created to provide a multidisciplinary approach to atopic dermatitis (also called eczema) and food allergies. Each patient is seen by a team that includes an attending physician, a pediatric nurse practitioner, a registered pediatric dietician, and a psychologist. Your child may see some or all of these providers.
- The Center also treats other allergic problems that your child may have, such as asthma, other breathing problems, hay fever, hives, and reactions to medication and vaccines.
- Please fill out the enclosed forms completely. They may take a long time to complete. The information on these forms helps us care for your child.
- **Please send these forms back to us in the enclosed postage paid envelope. Once we receive the forms, we will call you to schedule an appointment.**

### *What will happen during the first visit?*

- The evaluation may take one or more visits.
- During the first visit, a nurse practitioner will ask questions, and do a physical examination.
- X-rays, allergy skin testing, breathing tests, blood tests, or other tests may be done.
- Regular follow-up visits may be needed to see how your child is doing.
- Education and support are provided to you/your child about atopic dermatitis, skin care, and food allergy.

### *How long will the visit take?*

- The first visit can take 2 to 4 hours.
- Follow-up visits will take about 1 to 2 hours.
- Bring toys and books to keep your child busy during the visit.
- Plan to arrive 30 to 45 minutes before the time of your visit. This will give you enough time to park and review insurance information.
- If you do not arrive on time, your appointment may be cancelled or we may only do a partial evaluation.

### *What if my child is taking medication?*

- Do not give your child medicine that contains **antihistamines** prior to the visit.
- If your child takes Allegra<sup>®</sup>, Claritin<sup>®</sup>, Clarinex<sup>®</sup>, Clemastine<sup>®</sup>, Tavist<sup>®</sup>, or Atarax<sup>®</sup> do not give it for 7-10 days before the visit. If your child takes Zyrtec<sup>®</sup> do not give it for 10-14 days before the visit.
- Antihistamines are also found in many non-prescription cold or allergy medicines, these should be stopped at least 3 days before the visit. Examples are: Benadryl<sup>®</sup>, Actifed<sup>®</sup>, Dimetapp<sup>®</sup>, Pediacare<sup>®</sup>, and Triaminic<sup>®</sup> cold formulas as well as many others.

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- If you do not know whether your child's medicine contains antihistamines, ask the pharmacist or call the Allergy Program and ask to speak with a nurse.
- If you are unable to stop the medication, or your child develops symptoms while off the medication, please call the Allergy Program and ask to speak with a nurse.
- **DO NOT** stop other medications prescribed by your doctor.
- Do not give your child asthma medications (bronchodilators) such as albuterol, Ventolin<sup>®</sup>, Proventil<sup>®</sup>, Xopenex<sup>®</sup> or Maxair<sup>®</sup> on the day of the visit **unless your child is coughing or wheezing**. Other asthma medications and antibiotics should be given as usual.

### ***Clinical Research***

During your visit to the Allergy/Immunology Program, you may be asked if you are willing to have your child participate in a clinical research study or clinical trial. All clinical research is approved by the Children's Hospital Institutional Review Board (IRB). Participation in any research study at Children's Hospital is always voluntary.

### ***Who are the staff in the Center for Pediatric Atopic Dermatitis and Food Allergy?***

- A pediatric nurse practitioner and a doctor will see your child.
- The nurse practitioner manages all of your child's care and works closely with the attending doctor.
- The nursing staff cares for your child and teaches you about your child's illness. They may do allergy skin tests and breathing tests.
- A psychologist/behavior therapist may meet with you and your child. The psychologist/behavior therapist will help you/your child learn ways to cope with the itching and scratching of atopic dermatitis and will listen to you/your child's concerns about food allergies.
- A nutritionist may meet with you to review your child's diet.

### ***Are doctors or nurse practitioners available during the night and on weekends?***

- An allergy doctor is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- If your child has a problem or you have a question, call the Children's Hospital page operator at (617) 355-6369 and ask for the allergy doctor on call.
- **If your child has trouble breathing, or is having an allergic reaction, call 911 and take him or her directly to the closest emergency room.**

### ***How can I prepare for my child's visit?***

- Please fill out the enclosed forms completely. They may take a long time to complete. The information on these forms helps us care for your child.
- **Please send these forms back to us in the enclosed postage paid envelope. Once we receive the forms, we will call you to schedule an appointment.**
- Bring your child's medical records. Bring a growth chart and immunization records, if possible. Ask your primary care doctor or nurse practitioner for this information.
- Bring all recent x-rays, blood test, and skin test results.
- Bring everything you use on your child's skin.
- Bring all medications and spacers that your child uses.

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- Bring toys and books to keep your child busy during the visit.
- Bring the name and complete address of your child's primary care provider and anyone else to whom you would like a report sent.

***For scheduling or canceling appointments at Children's Hospital***

Please call (617) 355-6117

***Questions for your provider, to speak to a nurse, or to request prescription refills or prior authorizations***

Please call Children's Hospital Boston at 617-355-6117

***Important Numbers at Children's Hospital***

Allergy/Immunology (617) 355-6117

Emergency Room (617) 355-6611

Allergist-on-Call (617) 355-6369

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A **Spanish** version of this is available from your provider.

Send comments or questions to: **Familyed**@childrens.harvard.edu

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