

ATOPIC DERMATITIS: PATIENT BILL OF RIGHTS

What to expect from your NHS

As a person living in England, there are a number of rights to which you are entitled. In order to make sure that you are receiving the care and treatment that is right for you, it is important that you understand your rights and what they mean for you as a person living with atopic dermatitis (also known as atopic eczema).

The NHS has set out these rights, together with a number of pledges that it is committed to achieve, as part of the NHS Constitution.¹ The Constitution highlights the importance of patients having a voice in decisions about their care and provides information on how you can have a say. It also outlines what patients, the public and staff can expect from the NHS in England. All NHS organisations, private and third sector providers supplying NHS services are required by law to take account of the Constitution in their decisions and actions.

This document summarises what you should expect from your interactions with the NHS and what this means for you specifically as a person living with atopic dermatitis.

Quick Guide

As an NHS patient in England you have a number of rights, including the right to:

- **Make informed choices about where you receive your care.**ⁱ This includes the right to choose your GP, unless there are reasonable grounds for refusal. You also have the right to choose the organisation or team that provides your NHS care when you are referred for your first outpatient appointment with a service led by a consultant or by a named healthcare professional.ⁱⁱ
 - **What this might mean for you:** *Choosing a GP with a special interest in dermatology if one is available and ensuring you are happy with the team or organisation you are referred to.*
- **Be given information about the tests and treatment options available** to adults with atopic dermatitis, what they involve and their risks and benefits.
 - **What this might mean for you:** *Having meaningful conversations with your GP or dermatologist about your atopic dermatitis and being given information about treatments and services available to you to help you make an informed decision on your care.*
- **Request a second opinion**, either from a specialist or another GP.ⁱⁱ
 - **What this might mean for you:** *If you do not think your condition is being managed appropriately or you have not been given a diagnosis for your symptoms, you can request another opinion from another GP or a specialist.*
- **Wait no longer than 18 weeks from GP referral to treatment.**ⁱⁱⁱ Your local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) must try to offer you a range of suitable alternative treatment providers if this is not possible.
 - **What this might mean for you:** *It may be appropriate for you to be referred to a specialist dermatologist, for example if your condition is severe or if you are not responding to treatment.*
- **Receive care and treatment that is appropriate for you**, meets your needs and reflects your preferences.
 - **What this might mean for you:** *Talking to your healthcare professional about your options, including the treatment and services that are clinically appropriate for you. Taking into account your views on what is important to you in terms of your treatment, for example enabling you to stay in employment or return to work. How your condition affects your mental health and wellbeing should also be considered.*
- **Be involved in planning and making decisions** about the care and treatment of your atopic dermatitis, including having the chance to self-manage if appropriate.
 - **What this might mean for you:** *Being provided with information on the full range of services and treatment options available to you to enable you to make decisions on your care with your healthcare professional based on your preferences and what is important to you.*
- **Receive drugs and treatments that have been recommended for use by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)** for adults with atopic dermatitis, if your doctor says they are clinically appropriate for you.
 - **What this might mean for you:** *You should not be refused access to any treatment that has been recommended by NICE if your doctor says that it is appropriate for you.*
- **Provide feedback** about the treatment of care you received on the NHS.
 - **What this might mean for you:** *If you are not satisfied with the care you have received or feel improvements could be made, you are entitled to provide feedback.*

FURTHER INFORMATION

ACCESS TO HEALTH SERVICES

As an adult with atopic dermatitis you have the right to:

- Transparent, accessible and comparable data on the quality of local healthcare providers.
- Choose your GP practice and be accepted by that practice unless there are reasonable grounds to refuse. You can also express a preference for using a particular doctor within your GP practice.
- Choose to go to any NHS hospital that provides dermatology services, or a private hospital, if you are referred for a first outpatient hospital appointment.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Start your consultant-led treatment within a maximum of 18 weeks from referral from your GP. Your local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) must try to offer you a range of suitable alternative treatment providers, including some private hospitals, if this is not possible.ⁱⁱⁱ

The NHS pledges to:

- Make the transition as smooth as possible when you are referred between services, and to include you in relevant discussions.
- Make decisions in a clear and transparent way, so that patients and the public can understand how services are planned and delivered.

QUALITY OF CARE

As an adult with atopic dermatitis you have the right to:

- Receive care and treatment that is appropriate for your atopic dermatitis, meets your needs and reflects your preferences.
- Be involved in planning and making decisions about the care and treatment of your atopic dermatitis, including the chance to self-manage.
- Receive drugs and treatments that have been recommended for use by NICE for adults with atopic dermatitis, if your doctor says they are clinically appropriate for you.
- Information about the test and treatment options available to adults with atopic dermatitis, what they involve and their risks and benefits.
- Accept or refuse treatment that is offered to you, and not to be given any physical examination or treatment unless you have given consent.
- Be treated with a professional standard of care, by appropriately qualified and experienced staff, in a properly approved or registered organisation that meets the required levels of safety and quality.
- Request a second opinion either from a specialist or another GP. However, you cannot insist on seeing a particular practitioner.

The NHS pledges to:

- Put you at the centre of decisions that affect you and work in partnership with you, your family, carers and representatives.
- Offer you easily accessible, reliable and relevant information that allows you to participate fully in your own healthcare decisions.
- Involve you in discussions about planning your care and to offer you a written record of what is agreed if you want one.
- Encourage and welcome feedback on your health and care experiences.

Unless otherwise highlighted, all statements are referenced in the NHS Constitution for England.

i. Department of Health. *The NHS Constitution for England* (October 2015): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-nhs-constitution-for-england/the-nhs-constitution-for-england>

ii. NHS Choices. *How do I get a second opinion?* (2016) <http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/910.aspx?CategoryID=68>

iii. Department of Health. *The Handbook to the NHS Constitution* (July 2015): https://www.2gether.nhs.uk/files/NHS_constitution_handbook_acc.pdf