

MYTH BUSTER

When it comes to atopic dermatitis, or eczema, there's misinformation everywhere. Whether it's left-field 'miracle' treatments, or just urban-myths, it can be hard to find the truth. Use our Myth Buster to see if you can separate fact from fiction.

[Test your knowledge](#)



**'Atopic dermatitis' and 'eczema'
are the exact same condition.**

Truth

Myth



Next

'Atopic dermatitis' and 'eczema' are the exact same condition.

Truth

Myth



Not quite. Here's what makes them different...

It's true that many people use eczema when referring to atopic dermatitis, but eczema is an umbrella term for conditions that cause the skin to become dry, itchy, and inflamed.^{1,2} AD, on the other hand, is a type of eczema – the most common type there is.^{1,2}

AD is a chronic, inflammatory condition caused, in part, by an imbalance in the immune system.³ It may develop as painful, itchy skin that is red or purple-brown in colour, and can have a substantial impact on quality of life.³ Some people call it 'atopic eczema' or just 'eczema', but 'atopic dermatitis' is, strictly speaking, the correct way to refer to AD.

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'Atopic dermatitis' and 'eczema' are the exact same condition.

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Great job, you clearly know your AD from your eczema.

It's true that many people use eczema when referring to atopic dermatitis, but eczema is an umbrella term for conditions that cause the skin to become dry, itchy, and inflamed.^{1,2} AD, on the other hand, is a type of eczema – the most common type there is.^{1,2}

AD is a chronic, inflammatory condition caused, in part, by an imbalance in the immune system.³ It may develop as painful, itchy skin that is red or purple-brown in colour, and can have a substantial impact on quality of life.³ Some people call it 'atopic eczema' or just 'eczema', but 'atopic dermatitis' is, strictly speaking, the correct way to refer to AD.

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If your current treatment isn't working, there's nothing else that can help to control your AD.

Truth

Myth



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Luckily, this may not be true.

We know how it feels when a treatment isn't working for you. It can be so frustrating. But that doesn't mean control isn't possible.

Our understanding of the condition is improving all the time. And there are more ways than ever before to help you manage it. So, if your AD is uncontrolled and impacting your life, speak to your doctor about what can be done to get it under control – for the long-term.

There may be another approach for you.

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That's right! So, what can you do?

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Next

AD is contagious and can be spread through direct contact with the skin.

Truth

Myth



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AD is contagious and can be spread through direct contact with the skin.

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Sometimes it's nice to be wrong.

Don't worry AD is not contagious, so you can't catch it from another person.¹ It's caused by a combination of genetic, environmental and immunological factors – not from who you come into contact with.^{1,2}

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AD is contagious and can be spread through direct contact with the skin.

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Nice job. We'd shake your hand if we could.

Don't worry AD is not contagious, so you can't catch it from another person.¹ It's caused by a combination of genetic, environmental and immunological factors – not from who you come into contact with.^{1,2}

Next

AD looks the same on all skin tones.

Truth

Myth



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AD looks the same on all skin tones.

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You obviously know your stuff!

AD can look different depending on your skin tone. Generally speaking, on lighter skin, AD rashes are red, and on darker skin, they are purple, brown or grey.^{1,2} Ethnicity can also affect the way AD appears on the skin. For example, people of Asian ethnicity tend to have rashes characterised by thickened skin or scaling compared to other groups.¹

Next

AD looks the same on all skin tones.

Truth

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Not quite. Just like some symptoms, myths can be hard to spot too.

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Next

AD often develops during childhood.

Truth

Myth



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You obviously know your stuff!

AD typically develops early on in life, particularly in children aged six months to five years old, but the condition can still develop in adolescence and adulthood.^{1,2} While some people do grow out of their AD as they get older, AD may continue to impact others into adulthood and throughout their life.²

This is why it's so important to try to gain long-term control of your AD as early as possible. And it's never too late for you to start.

Next

AD often develops during childhood.

Truth

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It's a sad truth, but one that's good to know.

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**The immune system plays a role
in the cause of AD.**

Truth

Myth



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**The immune system plays a role
in the cause of AD.**

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That's right, you know your AD inside and out!

The immune system does play a role in contributing to your AD.¹ That's because AD goes deeper than just the surface of your skin.¹ AD is caused by an imbalance in the immune system, alongside genetic and environmental factors, resulting in underlying inflammation and the symptoms you can see and feel.^{1,2}

It's important to understand that AD is not an autoimmune disease. Your immune system isn't attacking itself, but it is overactive.³

Next

**The immune system plays a role
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**Not quite. You might want to take a look
beneath the surface.**

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Your diet can impact your AD.

Truth

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Actually this is true for some people.

Certain foods may act as allergens for some people (triggering an allergic reaction), which can exacerbate AD symptoms.¹ Avoiding these foods may help with alleviating some symptoms, but food elimination diets should only be considered if recommended by a healthcare professional.^{1,2}

Changing your diet doesn't guarantee an improvement in AD symptoms.² So, before you make any changes to your weekly shop, talk to your doctor first.

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Your diet can impact your AD.

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For some people it really is true!

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Taking dietary supplements can cure your AD and prevent symptoms.

Truth

Myth



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If only it was that easy.

Unfortunately, there is currently no cure for AD.¹ There's also no substantial evidence to say that dietary supplements improve symptoms any more than traditional treatment options.^{2,3} This is why they aren't recommended as a complete replacement to existing treatments.² Talk to your doctor if you have any questions about taking dietary supplements.

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You're good at this!

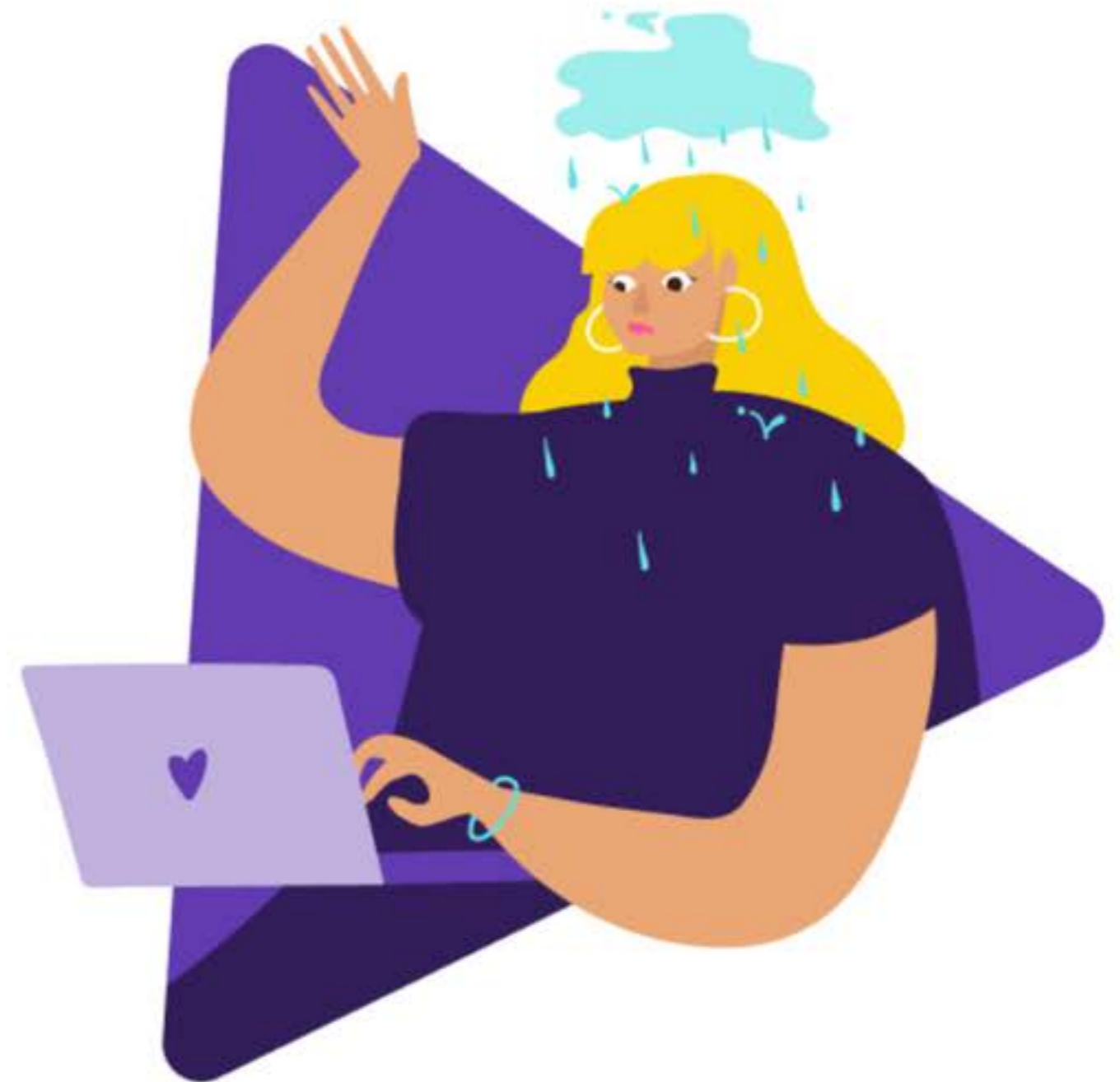
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AD is a condition that only impacts the skin.

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The impact of AD actually goes beyond the skin.

You probably know all too well that AD impacts your skin, from the itching to the dry skin that can bleed when scratched.¹ But the true impact of AD goes much further. Left uncontrolled, AD can have a large impact on your quality of life, including sleep, relationships, work productivity, and mental wellbeing.²

So, if anyone ever tells you that AD is 'just a skin condition', don't let them downplay what you experience every day. And if you feel like your AD is significantly impacting your life, speak to your doctor about achieving long-term control of your condition.

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AD is a condition that only impacts the skin.

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Great job, you're looking beyond the surface.

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**If you stop scratching, the itch
will go away.**

Truth

Myth



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If you stop scratching, the itch will go away.

Truth

Myth



That's right, it's not that simple.

Itch is the hallmark of AD, which is not only frustrating, but can result in loss of sleep, reduced productivity, and painful skin.^{1,2} Scratching the skin fuels a vicious cycle of increased inflammation, skin damage, and even more itch.^{1,3}

Although reducing how much you scratch your skin may help lessen the itch, the itching sensation can also be the result of dry skin, flares, exposure to irritants, as well as the underlying inflammation found in the skin.³

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If you stop scratching, the itch will go away.

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Myth



We wish it were true, but unfortunately not.

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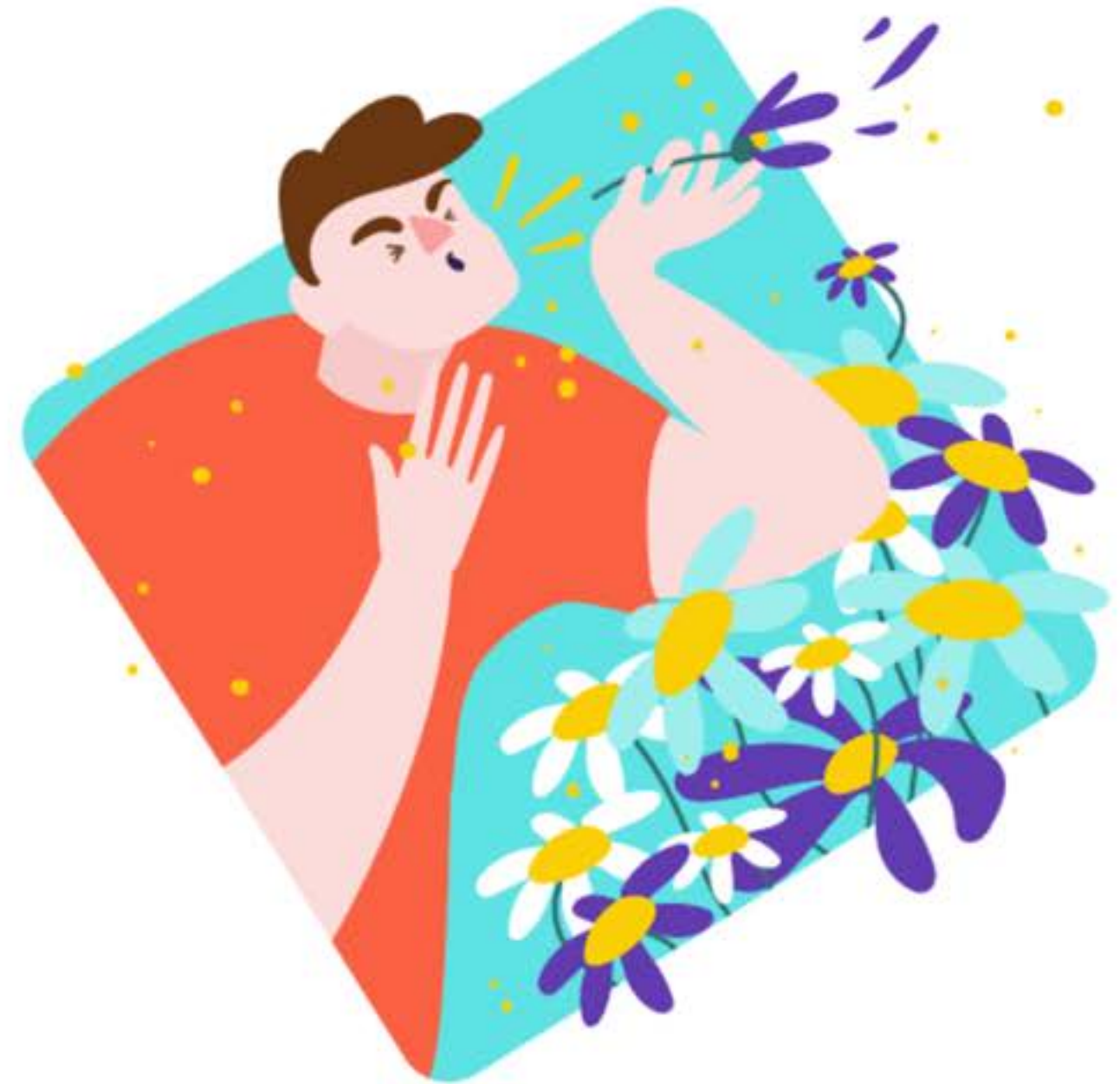
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Next

Because of the role the immune system plays in AD, you're more likely to develop asthma and hay fever too.

Truth

Myth



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Because of the role the immune system plays in AD, you're more likely to develop asthma and hay fever too.

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Myth



Unfortunately, you're right. What a rubbish package deal.

AD is related to allergic conditions and involves a similar imbalance in the immune system.¹ This imbalance in the immune system plays a role in asthma and hay fever (also known as allergic rhinitis) too – two other allergic conditions.¹ So, people living with AD have an increased likelihood of having asthma and hay fever.²

As these conditions all have a genetic element, they can also be inherited.¹ This is why you're more likely to develop AD if someone you're related to has AD, asthma, or hay fever.

Next

Because of the role the immune system plays in AD, you're more likely to develop asthma and hay fever too.

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We wish it was false too.

AD is related to allergic conditions and involves a similar imbalance in the immune system.¹ This imbalance in the immune system plays a role in asthma and hay fever (also known as allergic rhinitis) too – two other allergic conditions.¹ So, people living with AD have an increased likelihood of having asthma and hay fever.²

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If you haven't had a flare for a while, your AD has gone away.

Truth

Myth



Next

If you haven't had a flare for a while, your AD has gone away.

Truth

Myth



Oh, if only.

AD is a chronic, or long-lasting, condition. Unfortunately, that means it doesn't go away in between flares.¹ Even if you feel fine and your skin has no visible rashes, it's still affected by the underlying inflammation beneath the skin.¹

You can't see what's going on with the naked eye, but if you were to put your skin under a microscope, you'd see that the skin barrier is still damaged, and it is still affected by dryness, increased inflammatory chemicals, and sensitivity to irritants.^{1,2}

So yes, AD may be with you for the long-term.

But the good news? So is Change AD.

Next

If you haven't had a flare for a while, your AD has gone away.

Truth

Myth



Yes – sadly, it's not that simple.

AD is a chronic, or long-lasting, condition. Unfortunately, that means it doesn't go away in between flares.¹ Even if you feel fine and your skin has no visible rashes, it's still affected by the underlying inflammation beneath the skin.¹

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Next

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You got 2 correct!

Myths might be getting the better of you.

We get it. There's so much information around AD out there, it can be hard to find the truth. So why not stick around and learn some more?

Knowing the truth about your AD is important. It can help you make the right decisions about treatment, or help you avoid bad advice. If you ever want to check something you've heard about your AD, you can come back to the Myth Buster, or read some of the other helpful information we have. You can also clarify anything with your doctor, to make sure you're on the right track and busting common myths and misconceptions together.



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**Want to learn
more about AD?**

[Go to Understanding AD](#)



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You got 7 correct!

You know your stuff, but there's always room for improvement.

You're on the right track, you just need a nudge in the right direction. Take a look through our handy articles and you might just become a pro myth-buster.

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12

You got 12 correct!

Who ya gonna call? Myth Buster!

It's great that you know your AD so well. But, if you ever need a refresher, we're right here to help.

Knowing the truth about your AD is important. It can help you make the right decisions about treatment, or help you avoid bad advice. If you ever want to check something you've heard about your AD, you can come back to the Myth Buster, or read some of the other helpful information we have. You can also clarify anything with your doctor, to make sure you're on the right track and busting common myths and misconceptions together.



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