

A treatment guide

For adults living with atopic dermatitis

UNDERSTANDING ECZEMA TREATMENT OPTIONS



Change 

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GETTING TO KNOW YOUR TREATMENT OPTIONS

Atopic dermatitis (AD), sometimes referred to as atopic eczema, isn't 'just a skin condition'. It goes deeper. AD is caused in part by genetic and environmental factors, as well as an imbalance in the immune system, which contributes to long-term inflammation underneath the skin.¹ So though you may have days, weeks or even months between flares, the inflammation beneath may still be active.

There's already lots of treatments out there that you may have used to keep your AD symptoms at bay, but evidence suggests around 3 in 5 people living with moderate-to-severe AD are poorly managed, meaning you may not be receiving the treatment that works best for you.²

We want to change that.

You know all too well the impact that AD can have on your life, and we're sure it can feel frustrating if your AD isn't under control.

Though there isn't a cure for AD currently, our understanding of AD and its underlying causes is progressing. This can inform the way we treat AD, to reduce the impact it has on your life.

With this guide, we'll help you understand the different treatment options that might be available to you. This will prepare you to confidently discuss different treatments with your doctor to work towards finding the control you deserve.





**THE RIGHT
TREATMENT CAN
HELP **CHANGE** MORE
THAN JUST YOUR AD**



DISCUSSING

**TREATMENT OPTIONS
WITH YOUR DOCTOR
IS THE FIRST STEP TO
FINDING THE RIGHT
ONE FOR YOU**

EMOLLIENTS AND MOISTURISERS

Creams that are applied directly to your skin to hydrate the area.³

At a glance

Emollients and moisturisers protect your skin from losing moisture, providing a barrier that traps in water.^{3,4} This limits itchy, dry skin and reduces the risk of infection.⁴ They can be useful to all people with AD, regardless of severity, even alongside other treatments.^{5,6}

Key points

- ▶ Emollients and moisturisers are good at keeping your skin hydrated if applied at least twice daily.³ Emollients work best on non-inflamed skin, so it's important to apply moisturisers even when you have no visual sign of inflammation^{3,6}
- ▶ They treat the symptoms of AD only (such as dry, scaly, itchy skin), not the underlying inflammation^{3,4}
- ▶ Emollients may be readily available to purchase at your supermarket or pharmacy



Tip 1: You can apply these regularly and generously.^{3,5}

Tip 2: Applying them cold may also help to soothe your itch.⁷

TOPICAL CORTICOSTEROIDS

Topical corticosteroids are a type of medicine, available as different forms including creams and ointments, which are applied directly to the skin to reduce the inflammation and irritation associated with AD.⁸

 **At a glance** Topical corticosteroids may be one of the first treatments prescribed when diagnosed with AD.^{3,9} They range in strength, and can be tailored to the severity of your AD.⁹

Topical corticosteroids are usually applied directly to the affected skin region.^{3,10} You may want to use a wet wrap to help treat particularly inflamed or oozing skin.^{3,9} Talk to your doctor about how to prepare these before using this treatment.

Not sure what a wet wrap is?

There are two layers – the first is a wet, clean dressing wrapped around the affected area, which should have already been bathed, moisturised, and treated with your medication.⁹ Wet wraps can increase the absorption of your treatment into the skin.⁹

Wear pajamas or other comfy clothes on top for the dry second layer.⁹

Key points

- ▶ Topical corticosteroids are considered a mainstay of anti-inflammatory treatment for atopic dermatitis in both adults and children, and have been used for 60 years to help reduce the severity of damaged skin and itch⁹
- ▶ Topical corticosteroids are applied to the skin that is affected by your AD and help reduce the inflammation in that area⁹
- ▶ The most common side effect of topical corticosteroids is a small burning sensation when applied to the skin, but this usually improves as your skin gets used to the treatment⁸
- ▶ Your doctor can advise you on how frequently to apply the topical corticosteroid to your skin, as frequency of application and the strength of the topical corticosteroid can vary depending on your AD⁹



Only use wet wraps as advised by your doctor or dermatologist.

TOPICAL CALCINEURIN INHIBITORS

These medicines work in the immune system by interfering with the production of chemicals that contribute to the skin inflammation associated with AD.¹¹

👁 At a glance Your doctor may discuss the use of topical calcineurin inhibitors to help control your AD. They are non-steroidal medications that can be used to help reduce AD symptoms and flares and are available as an ointment or cream.¹²

Topical calcineurin inhibitors can be applied to affected skin on all parts of the body, including the face and genitals, where topical corticosteroid use may not be preferred.¹²

- 🔑 Key points**
- ▶ This treatment may be applied directly to the skin when needed to help reduce inflammation¹²
 - ▶ Calcineurin inhibitors may give a tingling or burning sensation — a common side effect.^{3,12} This can last for approximately one hour, but within a few days of use, the tingling typically disappears³
 - ▶ If you're using topical calcineurin inhibitors, it's recommended to use sunscreen when going out into the sun to help protect your skin from UV light.³ Speak to your doctor to learn more

PHOTOTHERAPY

Phototherapy uses different wavelengths of ultraviolet (UV) light to help reduce itch and inflammation associated with AD.³

At a glance

Phototherapy can be useful for people with long-term skin lesions, where the skin is thickened and itchy.³ This treatment requires treating the skin with artificial UV light and would need to be carried out by a healthcare professional in a clinic.^{3,13}

Key points

- ▶ The effects of phototherapy act in the immune system and are anti-inflammatory, making it a suitable treatment for some people with AD³
- ▶ Phototherapy may be prescribed alongside another treatment, such as topical corticosteroids or emollients³
- ▶ The benefits of this treatment vary from person to person.³ For some, it can improve your AD symptoms and reduce levels of bacteria³
- ▶ Phototherapy is typically used regularly to treat chronic itch sensations and hardened skin, rather than only when a flare appears³
- ▶ Phototherapy may require regular travel to a site that offers this in-office treatment, and the length of treatment can vary depending on the individual condition³
- ▶ This treatment wouldn't be prescribed if your condition appears to worsen during natural sunlight, and most common side effects include sun burn and skin tenderness^{3,13}

BIOLOGIC AGENTS

Biologics are a type of medication that are processed in the body differently than oral medications (pills) or steroids.

👁️ At a glance

Biologic agents may be considered if topical treatments alone haven't been effective at getting your AD under control.⁶

Biologic agents are given as an injection.¹⁴ This stops the medicine from being broken down in your stomach so that it can reach the immune system. If you are prescribed a biologic you will be given support and training on how to inject the medicine.

🔑 Key points

- ▶ Biologics specifically target the underlying inflammation associated with your AD symptoms, helping to reduce itch and improve the condition of the skin⁶
- ▶ Biologics can be used alone or in combination with topical treatments to help get your AD under control⁶
- ▶ Side effects may vary for different biologics. Speak to your doctor about side effects associated with particular products
- ▶ The most common side effects of biologics used to treat AD are injection site reactions, feelings of a cold, headache, and conjunctivitis¹⁴

JAK INHIBITORS

Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitors reduce the activity of enzymes in the immune system called 'Janus kinases', which are involved in inflammation.^{15,16}

👁️ At a glance

JAK inhibitors may be prescribed if topical treatments alone have not been able to control your AD.¹⁶

This medication is taken either **orally or topically** and your doctor will advise how often you should take it and for how long.^{15,16}

🔑 Key points

- ▶ JAK inhibitors work by blocking the activity of proteins in the immune system, helping to relieve symptoms of AD such as itch and condition of the skin^{15,16}
- ▶ JAK inhibitors can be used alone or in combination with topical treatments to help get your AD under control¹⁶
- ▶ Side effects may vary for different JAK inhibitors. Speak to your doctor about side effects associated with particular products
- ▶ The most common side effects of JAK inhibitors used to treat AD include increased 'bad' cholesterol, infections, upper respiratory tract infections and headaches¹⁶
- ▶ You may need to have check ups and tests before starting to use and while you are using JAK inhibitors to monitor your progress and ensure that the treatment is not causing problems

IMMUNOSUPPRESSANTS

Immunosuppressants are medicines that broadly inhibit or prevent activity of your immune system, which can reduce the inflammation associated with AD.¹⁷

At a glance

If your AD symptoms are not controlled by topical treatments alone and are significantly impacting your quality of life, your doctor may discuss using immunosuppressants to manage your AD.¹⁷ Immunosuppressants work by suppressing the immune system to help reduce AD symptoms.¹⁷

For the treatment of AD, immunosuppressants are usually taken orally (via mouth).¹⁷ Generally, they are used for short periods of time before switching to other medications for long-term management.¹⁷



Key points

- ▶ Immunosuppressants can be effective at reducing itch and allowing the skin to heal.¹⁷ However, your doctor may encourage you to switch back to an alternative treatment for long-term management¹⁷
- ▶ There are many different systemic immunosuppressants, with treatment plans and side effects varying for each drug.^{6,17} Your doctor or dermatologist will help determine if they are right for you
- ▶ Oral corticosteroids are a type of immunosuppressant.¹⁷ They are only used reactively to get a flare under control as use for longer than a month may result in serious side effects, including infections¹⁷
- ▶ Check-ups and tests with your doctor or dermatologist may be required to monitor your progress and make sure your treatment is not causing problems^{6,17}

CHANGE STARTS HERE

Now that you know about the different treatments available for AD, take that knowledge to your dermatologist and discuss which treatment option is best for you.

To find more information and support, **visit [ChangeAD.com](https://www.changead.com)**





Living with AD during COVID-19

If you have any concerns about navigating treatments during the pandemic, please talk to your doctor.

For more support and information, go to [\[Insert local web link\]](#)

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**KNOW YOUR NEEDS.
DISCUSS YOUR OPTIONS.
CHANGE AD.**

