

What's the Best Treatment for My Atopic Dermatitis?

If moisturization (including soak-and-seal after bathing) and management strategies (reducing exposures to allergens and irritants) are not fully effective in treating your atopic dermatitis, your doctor may recommend topical or systemic medications. Discuss the pros and cons of each medication option.

Topical Treatments

Medicated ointments, creams, lotions, gels, oils or sprays that you apply to the skin.

	Corticosteroids	Calcineurin inhibitors	Crisaborole 2%
Use:	Controls redness and itching; apply 1-2X per day; approved for children, including infants as young as 3 months	For use on eyelids, armpits, mouth area, groin; apply 1-2X per day; approved for children ages 2 or older	For use on eyelids, armpits, mouth area, groin; apply 1-2X per day; approved for children ages 2 or older
Side effects:	Redness, stretch marks, skin thinning, spider veins, face rash	Stinging or burning may occur upon first use; very slight risk of infection	Stinging or burning sensation may occur
Cost*:	Low to moderate cost	Moderate cost	High cost

Systemic Treatments

Injectable biologics, oral corticosteroids or phototherapy designed to treat the entire body – typically prescribed for patients with persistent, moderate-to-severe atopic dermatitis who need more than topical treatments.

	Dupilumab (Dupixent®)	Oral or injectable corticosteroids	Phototherapy (light therapy)
Use:	Biologic medication injected under the skin every 2 weeks	Daily pill or long-acting injection given at doctor's office – should not be used long-term due to side effects; approved for children	Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light to reduce inflammation and itch and boost the body's ability to fight bacteria; can be applied to specific areas or entire body; approved for children ages 6 and older
Side effects:	Redness or itching at injection site; eye or eyelid inflammation; allergic reaction	Weakened muscles; bone thinning; eye problems; diabetes; sleep problems; mood swings or behavior changes; symptoms may worsen post-treatment	Sunburn; skin aging; risk of skin cancer
Cost*:	High cost	Low cost	Moderate to high cost

** May depend on your health insurance coverage*

You Make the Call

Take the complete Shared Decision Making Tool at EczemaRelief.acaai.org. Share the results with your doctor so that you both come to a decision on the best treatment plan for you.