

# Managing Atopic Dermatitis



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There are several treatment options that can be used to control the signs and symptoms of AD and improve your condition. Managing AD usually involves a mix of treatments. Your doctor will work with you to create a treatment plan based on some factors such as:<sup>1</sup>

- Whether your condition is mild, moderate, or severe
- How much of your body is affected
- How much itching you have
- Your age
- How much AD impacts your life
- Other health conditions you have
- Any medicines you take
- Your lifestyle, preferences, and personal goals

### Treatment Goals

Some of the goals of treatment are to:<sup>2</sup>

- Control dry skin, itching, and inflammation
- Help your skin heal
- Prevent infections
- Prevent flares

### Medicines



**Topical treatments:** Topicals are applied directly on the skin. They come in different forms including creams, ointments, lotions, and sprays. Some can be purchased over-the-counter while others need to be prescribed by a doctor.<sup>2-4</sup>

Depending on the ingredients, topicals can help:

- Moisturize your skin and improve the skin barrier<sup>2</sup>
- Ease symptoms such as itching, redness, oozing, and thickened skin<sup>3,5</sup>
- Improve your skin's ability to keep out germs and other things that can irritate it<sup>5</sup>
- Reduce inflammation and prevent flares<sup>2</sup>



#### Pills:

- These medicines are usually prescribed for those with more severe, widespread AD. They work throughout your body to calm an overactive immune system and help improve your symptoms.<sup>2,5</sup>



#### Injectable biologics:

- Given through a shot under the skin, these types of medicines regulate the immune system to help control AD symptoms.<sup>2</sup>

## Phototherapy

Also called light therapy, this type of treatment exposes your skin to ultraviolet light. Your doctor may recommend this if your AD:<sup>2</sup>

- Is moderate to severe
- Is widespread on your body
- Hasn't responded to other treatments

## Trigger Management

When you have AD, your skin can be very sensitive and may overreact to certain triggers which can cause a flare. Triggers can vary from person to person. Knowing what your triggers are can help you avoid them.<sup>5</sup>

**Talk with your doctor to learn what your triggers are and how to manage them.**

## Skin Care

When you have AD, it's important that you care for your skin every day. Here are some tips:<sup>2</sup>

- Bathing – Take lukewarm baths to cleanse and moisturize the skin without drying it excessively. Limit baths to once a day.
- Soaps – Use mild, unscented soaps and cleansers that may be gentler on the skin.
- Drying off – Pat your skin dry. Avoid rubbing too hard.
- Moisturizer – Before your skin is completely dry, apply a moisturizer to help seal in the water. Using a moisturizer daily is important even when you don't have symptoms.
- Avoid irritants – Protect your skin and don't wear clothes made of rough, irritating fabrics such as wool.

### **Other tips to protect your skin and control symptoms<sup>2</sup>**

- Manage stress
- Avoid scratching or rubbing which can irritate you skin and cause it to itch more
- Keep your fingernails short
- Keep indoor temperatures cool and the humidity level stable
- Get restful sleep

Follow your treatment plan as directed. Partner with your doctor to ensure your treatment plan works best for you.

### **Living with AD**

Living with AD can be hard. It can affect your sleep, self-confidence, and performance at work or school.<sup>4</sup> The disease can also be hard on caregivers. If AD is bothering you, talk with your doctor or other health care provider.



## References

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