



**PENINSULA**  
**DERMATOLOGY**  
*and laser clinic*

## **Atopic Dermatitis (Eczema)**

### **How is atopic dermatitis (eczema) treated?**

Treatment will depend on your symptoms, age, and general health. It will also depend on how severe your condition is.

There is no cure. The goals of treatment are to reduce itching and skin inflammation, to keep the skin lubricated, and to prevent infection.

These medicines are often used to treat atopic dermatitis:

**Steroid creams or ointments.** These are put on the skin to help ease inflammation, itching, and swelling. Many topical steroids are available in different strengths. If overused, they can cause skin thinning and discoloration, but if used within guidelines they are safe. Ointments tend to be stronger and more moisturizing than creams, but can feel greasy/oily.

Your provider has ordered:

\_\_\_\_\_ this is a low potency steroid that is safe to be used on your face/ armpits/groin for up to three weeks at a time as needed followed by one week of rest.

\_\_\_\_\_ this is a mid-potency steroid that is safe to use on larger areas of the body twice daily for up to three weeks at a time followed by one week of rest.

\_\_\_\_\_ this is a high potency steroid used for difficult to treat smaller areas of the body such as hands, can be used for up to three weeks at a time followed by one week of rest.

**Topical calcineurin inhibitors.** These are nonsteroidal medicines that stop a part of the immune response that causes atopic dermatitis. These medications do not carry the risk of thinning the skin and can be used in sensitive areas. However, these medications can cause a burning sensation when applied to inflamed/red areas—this is a known possible side effect of the medication and is not an allergy.

Your provider has ordered:

\_\_\_\_\_ apply to affected areas twice daily as needed.

**Topical PDE4 inhibitor.** This medicine blocks an enzyme that plays a role in causing inflammation. It can be applied twice a day.

Your provider has ordered:

\_\_\_\_\_ to be applied to affected areas twice daily.

**Ultraviolet (UV) light therapy:** Light therapy uses UV light of certain wavelengths to target the immune system. It stops the responses that lead to inflammation. Phototherapy may be used along with other treatments. There are risks and benefits of light therapy. Weigh these

**Systemic Therapies:** When eczema is not adequately controlled with the above therapies, there are oral and injectable therapies available. You can discuss with your provider the risks and benefits of these options as needed.