



**NATIONAL
Eczema
ASSOCIATION**

Prescription Treatments for Eczema



TOPICALS

Topical **steroids** work by reducing inflammation in the skin. They also make blood vessels near the surface of the skin tighter, which helps decrease redness. Topical steroids come in varying strengths and formulations. They should be used sparingly to control flares. When using steroids, follow the provider's directions closely and do not apply on sensitive areas such as the eyelids or genitals. Steroids are prescribed for all forms of eczema.

Protopic and Elidel are **topical calcineurin inhibitors (TCIs)**. Once absorbed in the skin, TCIs are anti-inflammatory and work by stopping a piece of the immune system from "switching on." They do not contain steroids and can be used for extended periods of time to control symptoms and reduce flares. TCIs are prescribed for atopic dermatitis, contact dermatitis, nummular eczema and seborrheic dermatitis.

Eucrisa is a non-steroidal, topical **phosphodiesterase 4 (PDE4) inhibitor** that works by blocking the PDE4 enzyme, which in turn reduces inflammation on and below the surface of the skin. A topical PDE4 inhibitor can be used for extended periods of time to control symptoms and reduce flares. Eucrisa is prescribed for mild to moderate atopic dermatitis.

Prescription skin barrier protection medications, usually made from lipids and ceramides, help prevent moisture loss and guard against irritants entering the skin. Lipids and ceramides are made from fats, oils and waxes. People with eczema have a deficiency of natural lipids, which contributes to intense dry skin and itching. Skin barrier protection medications are prescribed for all types of eczema.

PHOTOTHERAPY

Also known as light therapy, phototherapy exposes the skin to a special type of light called ultraviolet B (UVB) using a walk-in machine. Phototherapy treatment is done several times a week in the doctor's office over a period of several weeks or even months. Phototherapy is thought to work on certain types of eczema by slowing inflammation and cell division.

IMMUNOSUPPRESSANTS

Immunosuppressants work by controlling, or suppressing, the immune system. Suppressing the immune system can slow down eczema symptoms by reducing inflammation. Immunosuppressants are typically in pill form but can also be taken by injection. Methotrexate, cyclosporine and mycophenolate are all considered immunosuppressants. These medications are prescribed "off-label," which means that they're not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat eczema. Immunosuppressants are prescribed for moderate to severe atopic dermatitis.

BIOLOGICS

Biologic drugs or "biologics" are engineered from proteins derived from living cells or tissues and are taken by injection. The biologic Dupixent works by targeting a part of the immune system thought to contribute to the symptoms of moderate to severe atopic dermatitis. By slowing the immune system reaction, Dupixent reduces inflammation, which in turn reduces skin redness, itch, and rash associated with atopic dermatitis. Dupixent is prescribed for moderate to severe atopic dermatitis in adults.

National Eczema Association (NEA) is the leading advocacy organization serving people with eczema and those who love them. Go to nationaleczema.org to find out more.