

What You Can Do to Help Your Child Who Has AD

Why Does AD Happen in Children?

Atopic dermatitis (AD) is a skin condition caused by inflammation in the body. It is very common in babies and children, appearing as early as ages 3 and 6 months. The exact cause of AD is not known but things like genetics, environmental factors, allergens, infections, and the child's immune system not being fully developed can damage the skin, causing intense itching and dry, scaly, red skin.

How Can AD Be Treated in Children?

AD is a lifelong (chronic) skin disease that comes and goes, and it can impact your child's quality of life. While there is no cure for AD, basic care and medicines can help relieve your child's symptoms.

Basic care includes 2 main steps: skin care and avoiding triggers.

Skin care:

- Take warm baths or showers at least once a day using a non-soap cleanser
- Moisturize liberally and frequently (even on clear areas)
- Keep your child's fingernails short to prevent scratching, which can cause skin irritation and infection

Avoid triggers:

- Allergens and common irritants (eg, certain soaps, wool, extreme hot or cold temperatures)
- Manage other health conditions that your child may have

Your child's doctor may prescribe a medicine based on symptoms, age, and general health, and on the severity of the condition.

Medicines that may be used to treat AD include:

- Topical treatment with ointments, creams or lotions applied to the skin:
 - Corticosteroids creams/ointment
 - Calcineurin inhibitors cream/ointment
 - Phosphodiesterase-4 (PDE4) inhibitors/ointment
- Antibiotic
- Antihistamine
- Phototherapy
- Immunomodulatory medicines (pill or liquid)
- Biologics (in severe cases)





Signs That Treatment Isn't Working

Call your child's doctor if:

- If your child's AD doesn't get better after the treatment or it comes back right away
- Your child has a fever
- There are signs of skin infection (eg, increased redness, warmth, swelling, or fluid)

The doctor may need to run additional checks for any allergies, reactions to foods, infections, and family history. It's also important to make sure that your child is following basic care and that the medicines are being taken as prescribed.

Questions to Ask Your Child's Doctor

Talk to your child's doctor and encourage your child to share his/her experiences with the doctor honestly so you can manage the symptoms together as a team.

My child is having trouble with _____. What should we do?

Will my child's AD get better as he/she gets older?

What kind of side effects do the medicines have?

What are some other ways to help relieve my child's symptoms?

How can I help my child live with AD?