



Specialty Pharmacy

# Atopic Dermatitis Wellness Guide

Walmart 

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## Introduction

Whether you’re actively managing a condition or just looking for information, Walmart Specialty Pharmacy is here to support you every step of the way. We’re also here to make it easy to get your prescriptions, stay on track with your medication refills, and answer any other questions you may have.

We understand that treatment involves more than just medication. So, we’re here to help you understand the lifestyle changes that may make managing your condition easier on a daily basis.

It is always recommended that you talk with your doctor about any changes to treatment plans.

Remember, your health conditions do not define you! It’s okay to ask for help.

## What is atopic dermatitis?

Atopic dermatitis is a chronic (long-term) autoimmune disease of the skin that causes inflammation, itching, redness, discoloration and scaling of the skin due to an infection. Some people may refer to atopic dermatitis as eczema. Patients with atopic dermatitis can experience periods of flares during which the symptoms worsen, followed by periods of remission where the symptoms may clear completely or be minimal.

Any area on the skin may be affected, including hands, elbows, face, neck, ankles, and around the eyes. Atopic dermatitis is not contagious and can't be spread from person to person. Atopic dermatitis is more than 'just a rash.' It can decrease the quality of life and sleep depending on its severity. For some people, it may also cause embarrassment and social isolation.<sup>8</sup> Atopic dermatitis is more common in non-Hispanic black children. Also, women and girls tend to develop atopic dermatitis slightly more often than men and boys.<sup>9</sup> Atopic dermatitis often starts at a young age, but many adults also suffer from this condition.<sup>2</sup>

## What causes atopic dermatitis?

The precise cause of atopic dermatitis is not known. However, several factors are believed to increase a person's risk of developing the disease.

- **Pre-existing conditions** - Asthma and allergic rhinitis (hay fever) can increase the chance of developing atopic dermatitis.
- **Genetics** - A family history of atopic dermatitis increases one's risk.
- **Filaggrin** - A protein called filaggrin helps healthy skin maintain a moisture barrier on the skin. Scientists have discovered that changes in the gene responsible for producing filaggrin lead to excessive dryness and the symptoms associated with atopic dermatitis.
- **Immune system abnormalities** - When the immune system becomes overactive or confused, abnormalities may occur, leading to inflammation and damage in the skin that can result in atopic dermatitis.
- **Foods** - Depending on the person, certain foods may cause worsening of atopic dermatitis. Some foods commonly known to worsen atopic dermatitis are dairy products, eggs, and soy. However, each person is different. Not everyone experiences worsening due to these foods, and some people may not have any food sensitivity.
- **External factors** - Stress, pollution, tobacco smoke, fragrances or perfumes, contact with certain rough materials, or sudden temperature changes may worsen symptoms of atopic dermatitis.

## What are the symptoms of atopic dermatitis?

The most common symptom of atopic dermatitis is itching. The severity of itching will vary from person to person and depend on whether you're in a state of flare or remission. Additional symptoms include:<sup>2</sup>

- Dry skin
- Rash that may ooze in the affected area
- Thickening of skin
- Swollen, discolored skin
- Crusty, scaly patches of skin
- Infection
- Depression, anxiety
- Sleep loss

It's important to watch for infected skin when you or a loved one has atopic dermatitis. Due to excessive itching, scratching can lead to bleeding, exposing the skin to germs that can cause skin infections. One way to determine if skin may be infected is by the appearance of yellowish discharge (pus) from the affected area or crusts. If you notice the signs of a possible infection, call your doctor.<sup>7</sup>

During infancy and childhood, atopic dermatitis is common. For many, it goes away before the teenage years, although some children may continue to have symptoms as teens and adults. Infants up to two years of age may experience a red rash on the face, scalp, or creases of the joints that may thicken as they age. For example, bends of elbows, back of knees, neck, and ankles.<sup>9</sup>

Teens and adults may experience a dark brown scaly rash on the hands, neck, bends of elbows and knees, ankles, and feet. They may also have an extra fold of skin under the eye or darkening of the skin under the eyes.<sup>9</sup>

## What can you do to treat atopic dermatitis?

While there is no cure for atopic dermatitis, several treatment options are available to help relieve symptoms and bring about periods of remission. Depending on the type and severity of your condition, your doctor may recommend that you try one or more of the following methods:



**Prescription medicines** may help with symptoms like dry skin, itching, redness, and swelling. They work by reducing inflammation to allow healing. They may also help bring about and sustain remissions. Frequently prescribed medications for atopic dermatitis are topical but can also include medications taken by mouth or injections. Frequently prescribed medications for atopic dermatitis include topical calcineurin inhibitors, topical corticosteroids, phosphodiesterase inhibitors, Janus Kinase (JAK) inhibitors, and injectable biologics.<sup>2,5</sup>



**Over-the-counter medicines** like antihistamines and topical corticosteroids can help reduce itching, redness, swelling and may also help manage other mild to moderate symptoms.



**Vitamins & supplements** including Vitamin D, fish oil, zinc, selenium prebiotics, probiotics, turmeric, primrose oil, and melatonin may help manage symptoms.



**Make self-care & lifestyle choices** that can help reduce flare-ups and help prevent the condition from worsening, including moisturizing the skin. When choosing a moisturizer, look for fragrance-free, dye-free, and alcohol-free products, as these ingredients might worsen your symptoms. Petroleum jelly can help lock moisture in the skin, and using a humidifier can help the skin remain less dry.<sup>1,5</sup> Moisturizing the skin can help reduce the chance of infection and improve symptoms and sleep. Another way to help your skin feel its best is to choose soft, non-irritating clothing.<sup>6</sup>



**Diet & nutrition** are not believed to cause atopic dermatitis, but certain foods have been found to worsen symptoms for some people. People are often advised to carefully watch their diet to avoid foods that can cause flare-ups.<sup>1</sup> Talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what foods may be best for you. Walmart Grocery offers a large variety of healthy choices.



**Stop smoking tobacco** since it can have a harmful effect on anyone's health. It can increase your chances of getting other serious conditions like cancer. If you're having trouble stopping on your own, you can find helpful products at Walmart. Ask your pharmacist for recommendations.



**Focus on your mental health** since patients with atopic dermatitis report painful, stressful, and sometimes isolating feelings. Atopic dermatitis is associated with depression and anxiety and can affect your day-to-day well-being.<sup>7</sup> Talk to your doctor or care provider if you're experiencing anxiety, depression, or other issues.





**Guard against infection** since atopic dermatitis is tightly linked to autoimmune disorder. Make sure you're up to date on your immunizations and vaccines. Wash your hands frequently and avoid close contact with people who may be sick.



**Get support** from your family and friends. Loved ones of people with atopic dermatitis are often critical to treatment—but they're not always included as much as they could be. Involve your family in your treatment plan if possible.



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We're here to help!  
For a list of participating pharmacy locations visit  
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