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Diagnostic & Therapeutic Guidance for Atopic Dermatitis

Clinical findings that define atopic dermatitis

MUST BE PRESENT

- Pruritus
- Acute, Subacute or Chronic Eczema Lesions
- Age-Related Distribution Characteristics:
 - Infant stage starts on scalp or face, spreading to the trunk and extremities; chronic or chronic relapsing lesions lasting more than two months
 - Childhood stage includes neck, the flexural surfaces of the arms and legs; chronic or chronically relapsing lesions lasting more than six months
 - Adolescents and adults tend to have severe lesions on the upper half of the body, including the face, neck, anterior chest and back; chronic or chronically relapsing lesions lasting more than six months

Step forward when necessary and back one step when control is achieved

| STEP 1 | STEP 2 | STEP 3 | STEP 4 | STEP 5 |
|---|---|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Use emollient b.i.d. | Use emollient b.i.d. | Use emollient b.i.d. | Use emollient b.i.d. | Use emollient b.i.d. |
| Avoid triggers | Avoid triggers | Avoid triggers | Avoid triggers | Avoid triggers |
| | Intermittent low potency topical corticosteroid for flare control | Mid- to high-potency topical corticosteroid for flare control instead of or in addition to topical calcineurin inhibitor or topical PDE4 inhibitor | Higher potency topical corticosteroid for flare control | Photo Rx or Systemic Rx |
| | Possible topical calcineurin inhibitor alternative or topical PDE4 inhibitor | Topical calcineurin inhibitor long-term intermittent | Wet wrap therapy | |
| | +/- Antihistamines | +/- Antihistamines | +/- Antihistamines | +/- Antihistamines |
| <p>Mild Dermatitis (primarily dryness, mild erythema and scales) Maintenance prescription after step 1 if disease recurs frequently or persists</p> | | | | |
| <p>Moderate Dermatitis (primarily moderate erythema, scales, a few papules & excoriations) Maintenance prescription at Step 2 if disease recurs frequently or persists; antibiotic at Step 3 when necessary for infection; consider moving to step 5 with photo Rx or systemic Rx if disease is uncontrolled</p> | | | | |
| <p>Severe Dermatitis (primarily severe swelling/edema/infiltration or erythema with lichenification, multiple papules, severe scales, crusts, vesicles, erosion, multiple excoriations and pruriginous nodules) Use maintenance prescription standard; move to step 4 if disease is uncontrolled and step 5 as needed; antibiotic at Step 4 when necessary for infection</p> | | | | |

Changes in steps are in bold font.

