

Dupilumab for atopic dermatitis treatment pathway: NICE TA534¹ August 2018

Primary care treatment of atopic dermatitis:

Prior to treatment with dupilumab, commissioners expect that patients will have been treated in-line with the NICE CKS summary for atopic dermatitis².

Patients should have been treated with regular, copious amounts of emollients, topical corticosteroids and topical immunomodulators such as pimecrolimus or tacrolimus where appropriate (e.g. eczema involving the eyelids and peri-orbital skin, patients using regular topical steroids on the face or lower legs (particularly in the elderly or others at risk of leg ulcers) and patients with signs of skin atrophy).

Specialist referral:

- Diagnostic uncertainty
- Severe eczema
- Moderate to severe eczema not responding/partially responding to treatment options above
- Steroid atrophy or concerns regarding the amount of topical steroids/immunomodulators being used

Systemic treatment options² for specialist initiation:

- Before embarking on systemic therapy, avoidable reasons for the failure of topical treatments should be sought. These include low adherence, infection, allergy and insufficient treatment intensity.
- Phototherapy should be considered as an option bearing in mind the potential risk to someone who may subsequently receive immunosuppressive systemic agents.

There are four oral systemic treatment options and all patients must try and fail on at least one of these agents (unless contra-indications to all of them):

- **Ciclosporin** (RED at RUH, AMBER at GWH/SFT) (licensed): Rapid onset of action, and has been shown to offer a 50% reduction in atopic dermatitis severity with improved quality of life. Usually prescribed as a 6-9 month course to limit the risk of hypertension, nephrotoxicity and skin cancer. 80% of patients relapse within 2 months of finishing treatment.
- **Azathioprine** (unlicensed) has a slower onset of action, but can be taken for a longer course than ciclosporin.
- **Methotrexate** (unlicensed) Less experience but appears to be as effective as ciclosporin and is well tolerated.
- **Mycophenolate** (AMBER at RUH, RED at GWH/SFT) (unlicensed) appears to be as effective as ciclosporin and may be associated with a lower rate of relapse after treatment completion.

Dupilumab (injectable biologic)¹

The new biologic treatment Dupilumab, in combination with topical corticosteroids, is recommended as an option for treating moderate to severe atopic dermatitis in adults, only if:

- the disease has not responded to at least 1 other systemic therapy, such as ciclosporin, methotrexate, azathioprine and mycophenolate mofetil, or these are contraindicated or not tolerated

Stop dupilumab at 16 weeks if the atopic dermatitis has not responded adequately. An adequate response is:

- at least a 50% reduction in the Eczema Area and Severity Index score (EASI 50) from when treatment started and
- at least a 4-point reduction in the Dermatology Life Quality Index (DLQI) from when treatment started.

When using the EASI, healthcare professionals should take into account skin colour and how this could affect the EASI score, and make the clinical adjustments they consider appropriate.

When using the DLQI, healthcare professionals should take into account any physical, psychological, sensory or learning disabilities, or communication difficulties that could affect the responses to the DLQI, and make any adjustments they consider appropriate.

References

1. NICE TA534 Dupilumab for treating moderate to severe atopic dermatitis. August 2018
<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/TA534>
2. NICE CKS summary for atopic dermatitis. <https://cks.nice.org.uk/eczema-atopic>
3. Chaplin, S. Prescriber Guide to treatments used for atopic dermatitis in adults. Prescriber. <https://www.prescriber.co.uk/article/guide-treatments-used-atopic-dermatitis-adults/>
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Resources

- Atopic eczema proforma (BAD 2016): <http://www.bad.org.uk/shared/get-file.ashx?itemtype=document&id=4237>
- EASI score calculator system: <http://www.easicalc.uk/> or <https://www.easiscore.com/>
- Training video for EASI score system (University of Nottingham): <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/groups/cebd/news-updates/news/2015/training-video-for-easi.aspx>
- Easi Score DermNet NZ: <https://www.dermnetnz.org/topics/easi-score/>