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ROC Breathes Easy
Atopic Comorbidities

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ROC Breathes Easy Asthma Initiative

Atopic Comorbidities

Asthma, Atopic Dermatitis, & Allergic Rhinitis

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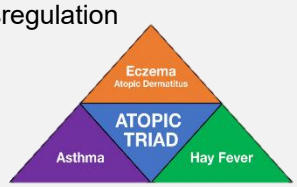
- **Atopic comorbidities**: Related allergic conditions that often occur together due to shared immune dysregulation
- **Common conditions**: Asthma, allergic rhinitis, atopic dermatitis, food allergy, eosinophilic esophagitis
- **This pearl focuses on**:
  - **Key management recommendations for asthma, atopic dermatitis, and allergic rhinitis**
  - **When to refer to allergy/immunology/dermatology**



Asthma Recommendations[1]

- Use ICS-containing therapy **in all ≥6 years old** for maintenance and reliever therapy
- **Avoid** SABA (i.e., albuterol) monotherapy
- Systemic steroids are reserved as **last resort** and long-term use should be **avoided**
- Refer to ROC Breathes Easy Asthma Initiative for simplified treatment and assessment guidance for asthma
- Before escalating therapy, assess adherence, confirm proper inhaler technique, and evaluate triggers and comorbidities
- **Refer to a specialist if diagnosis is unclear, asthma is severe/uncontrolled, there are multiple systemic steroid courses or prior hospitalization, or biologics/immunotherapy are being considered**

ICS: inhaled corticosteroid; SABA: short-acting beta-agonist

Atopic Dermatitis (Eczema) Recommendations[2]

- **Mild:** skin hydration + emollients ± low-/mid-potency TCS or TCI (Table 1 & 2); consider Eucrisa (crisaborole)* 2% if uncontrolled
- **Moderate:** skin hydration + emollients + mid-/high-potency TCS or TCI; consider Eucrisa (crisaborole) 2% or Vtama (tapinarof) 1% or Zorvye (roflumilast) 0.05 or 0.15%
- **Severe:** skin hydration + emollients + high-potency TCS ± TCI; consider topical Opzelura (ruxolitinib)
  - **Add systemic therapy:** Dupixent (dupilumab) (≥6 months) or Adbry (tralokinumab) (≥12 years)
  - **Alternatives:** oral JAK inhibitors (e.g., Rinvoq)
- **Avoid:** routine antimicrobials, systemic corticosteroids, food panel testing, and empiric elimination diets
- **Refer to a specialist:** uncontrolled disease, need for systemic therapy, recurrent infections, significant psychosocial burden, or uncertain diagnosis

*Estimated lowest GoodRx price for one 60-g tube of ointment = $158 (dependent by insurance, by region, and pharmacy)

Allergic Rhinitis (Environmental Allergy/Hay Fever) Recommendations[3]

- **Mild/intermittent (episodic) symptoms**
  - Preferred: INAH or INCS (Table 3 & 5) during symptomatic periods or predictable exposures
  - Alternative: Second-generation OAH (Table 4)
- **Moderate-severe or persistent symptoms**
  - Preferred: INCS (most effective single therapy) or INCS + INAH combination spray (first-line alternative) (Table 6)
  - Alternative: INAH +/- second-generation OAH
- **Avoid/Use cautiously**
  - **Avoid first-generation antihistamines (e.g., Benadryl) due to sedation/anticholinergic effects**
  - **Avoid** INCS + OAH instead of INCS alone
  - **Avoid** Singulair (montelukast) as first-line (lower efficacy, safety concerns)
  - **Avoid** systemic corticosteroids
  - **Limit** intranasal decongestants (e.g., Afrin) to short-term use only
  - **Refer to a specialist for persistent symptoms for evaluation/testing and consideration of immunotherapy***

*Gradual allergen exposure via subcutaneous (SCIT) or sublingual (SLIT) immunotherapy; an elective, disease-modifying option that may be preferred over medications

INAH: intranasal antihistamine; INCS: intranasal corticosteroid; OAH: oral antihistamine

Table 1. Topical Corticosteroids (TCS)

Potency	Corticosteroid	Preparation	Cost of generic*
Ultra-high	Clobetasol 0.05%	Ointment, cream, lotion, gel, foam	$20 for 30-g tube
High	Fluocinonide 0.05%	Ointment, cream, gel, solution	$20 for 30-g tube
Medium to high	Betamethasone valerate 0.1%	Ointment, cream, lotion, foam	$35 for 45-g tube
Medium	Triamcinolone acetonide 0.1%	Ointment, cream, lotion	$10 for 15-g tube
Medium to low	Fluticasone propionate 0.005%	Ointment, cream, lotion	$20 for 30-g tube
Low	Desonide 0.05%	Ointment, cream, lotion	$15 for 15-g tube
Very low	Hydrocortisone 2.5%	Ointment, cream, lotion	$10 for 30-g tube

*Estimated lowest GoodRx price for one tube of ointment (unless specified). Actual cost will vary with insurance, by region, and pharmacy. Information obtained at https://www.goodrx.com (accessed April 11, 2026; zip code: 14623)

Table 2. Atopic Dermatitis: Topical Calcineurin Inhibitors (TCI)

Potency	Calcineurin Inhibitor**	Preparation	Cost of generic*
Medium	Tacrolimus 0.1%	Ointment	$38 for 30-g tube
Medium to low	Tacrolimus 0.03%	Ointment	$38 for 30-g tube
Low	Pimecrolimus 1%	Cream	$80 for 30-g tube

*Estimated lowest GoodRx price for one tube of ointment (unless specified). Actual cost will vary with insurance, by region, and pharmacy. Information obtained at https://www.goodrx.com (accessed April 11, 2026; zip code: 14623)
**Prior authorization may be required depending on insurance

Table 3. Intranasal Corticosteroids (INCS)

Name	FDA Indications	Age Approved	Dosing	Side Effects	OTC or Rx	Cost*
Triamcinolone acetonide (Nasacort®) 55 mcg per spray	Seasonal and perennial AR	≥2 y	Age 2-5: 1 spray per nostril daily Age 6-11: 2 sprays per nostril every day Age ≥12: 2 sprays per nostril 1-2 times per day	Pharyngitis, epistaxis, cough	OTC	$12
Budesonide (Rhinocort) 32 mcg per spray	AR and nonallergic rhinitis	≥6 y	2 sprays per nostril twice daily or 4 sprays per nostril in the morning	Epistaxis, pharyngitis, bronchospasm, coughing, nasal irritation	Rx	$15
Flunisolide (Nasalide) 25 mcg per spray	Seasonal and perennial AR	≥6 y	Age 6-14: 1 spray per nostril 3 times per day or 2 sprays per nostril twice daily	Epistaxis, pharyngitis, cough, aftertaste, nasal burning, or stinging	Rx	$25
Fluticasone propionate (Flonase) 50 mcg per spray	AR and nonallergic rhinitis	≥4 y	1 spray per nostril every day Adult: 2 sprays per nostril daily	Headache, pharyngitis, epistaxis, nasal burning or irritation, N/V, cough	OTC	$15
Mometasone furoate (Nasonex™) 50 mcg per spray	Seasonal and perennial AR, nasal polyps	≥2 y	Age 2-11: 1 spray per nostril daily Age ≥12: 2 sprays per nostril daily	Headache, viral infections, pharyngitis, epistaxis, cough	OTC	$40

Fluticasone furoate (Flonase Sensimist®) 27.5 mcg per spray	Seasonal and perennial AR	≥2 y	Age 2-11: 1-2 sprays per nostril daily Age >11: 2 sprays per nostril daily	Epistaxis, headache, pharyngolaryngeal pain, nasal ulceration, back pain, pyrexia, cough	Rx	$30
*Estimated lowest GoodRx price for one package (unless specified). Actual cost will vary with insurance, by region, and pharmacy. Information obtained at https://www.goodrx.com (accessed April 11, 2026; zip code: 14623)						

Table 4. Second-Generation Oral Antihistamines (OAH)

Medication	FDA Indications (seasonal, perennial)	Approved Ages	Dosing	Common Side Effects	OTC or Rx	Cost*
Cetirizine (Zyrtec®)	Both	≥6 months	Age 2-5: 2.5 mg 1-2 times per day Age 6-12: 5-10 mg/day Age 12-65: 10 mg/d Age 66-76: 5-10 mg/day Age ≥77: 5 mg/day	Occasional sedation, mucosal dryness, urinary retention	OTC	$10
Levocetirizine (Xyzal®)	Both	≥6 months	Age 2-5: 1.25 mg/day Age 6-11: 2.5 mg/day Age ≥12: 2.5-5 mg/day	Occasional sedation, mucosal dryness, urinary retention	OTC	$10
Fexofenadine (Allegra®)	Seasonal	≥2 y	Age 2-11: 30 mg twice daily Age ≥12: 60 mg twice daily or 180 mg once daily	Occasional headache	OTC	$8
Loratadine (Claritin®)	Both	≥2 y	Age 2-5: 5 mg/day Age ≥6: 10 mg/day	Possible sedation with higher than usual doses	OTC	$8
Desloratadine (Clarinex®)	Both	≥6 months	Age 2-5: 1.25 mg/day Age 6-11: 2.5 mg/day Age ≥12: 5 mg/day	Possible sedation with higher than usual doses	Rx	$20
*Estimated lowest GoodRx price 30 tablets (unless specified). Actual cost will vary with insurance, by region, and pharmacy. Information obtained at https://www.goodrx.com (accessed April 11, 2026; zip code: 14623)						

Table 5. Intranasal Antihistamines (INAH)

Medication	FDA Indications	Approved Ages	Dosing	Common Side Effects	OTC or Rx	Cost*
Olopatadine (Patanase) 0.6% nasal spray	Seasonal AR	≥6 y	Age 6-11: 1 spray twice daily Age ≥12: 2 sprays twice daily	Bitter taste, epistaxis, somnolence, headache	Rx	$30
Azelastine (Astepro®) 0.1% solution	Seasonal AR, vasomotor rhinitis	≥6 y	Age 6-11: 1 spray twice daily Age ≥12: 1-2 sprays twice daily or 2 sprays once daily		Rx	$16
*Estimated lowest GoodRx price for one package (unless specified). Actual cost will vary with insurance, by region, and pharmacy. Information obtained at https://www.goodrx.com (accessed April 11, 2026; zip code: 14623)						

Table 6. Intranasal Corticosteroids (INCS) / Intranasal Antihistamine (INAH) Combinations

Medication	FDA Indications	Approved Ages	Dosing	Common Side Effects	OTC or Rx	Cost*
Azelastine-fluticasone propionate (Dymista) 137 mcg/50 mcg	Seasonal AR	≥6 y	1 spray per nostril twice daily	Altered taste, headache, epistaxis	Rx	$47
Olopatadine-mometasone (Ryaltris) 665 mcg/25 mcg	Seasonal AR	≥12 y	2 sprays per nostril twice daily	Altered taste, epistaxis	Rx	$275
*Estimated lowest GoodRx price for one package (unless specified). Actual cost will vary with insurance, by region, and pharmacy. Information obtained at https://www.goodrx.com (accessed April 11, 2026; zip code: 14623)						

Coverage of recommended therapies is subject to individual insurance benefit review and may require prior authorization or other utilization management requirements.

References

1. Global Initiative for Asthma. Global Strategy for Asthma Management and Prevention [Internet]. Global Initiative for Asthma; 2025.

2. Chu D, Schneider L, Asiniwasis R, et al. Atopic dermatitis (eczema) guidelines: 2023 American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Joint Task Force on Practice Parameters GRADE. Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. 2023; 132, 274-312

3. Dykewicz MS, Wallace DV, Amrol DJ, et al. Rhinitis 2020: A practice parameter update. Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology. 2020 Oct;146(4):721–67.