

The Skin's Function

Your skin is very resilient and is constantly renewing itself. There are many factors that can influence the overall wellbeing of your skin. Aging causes your skin to become thinner, less elastic, and more prone to trauma, such as skin tears. Your skin can also be affected by diseases like diabetes, kidney and liver problems, and certain medications. This guide will provide some basic skin care dos and don'ts to help you keep your skin as healthy as possible.

Skin Care Dos

- Check your skin for breakdown and dryness daily
- Cleanse skin with a mild pH balanced cleanser (not all patients require daily complete body wash)
- Test all bath water with your elbow or forearm to prevent burns and scalding
- Rinse skin thoroughly when washing- some soaps will leave a drying residue on the skin
- Dry all skin folds and creases- pay special attention to the areas between toes
- Apply moisturizers to skin immediately after bathing when skin is damp
- For extremely dry skin, use a lubricant like oil or cream vs. a lotion
- For dry, cracked hands and feet, apply a thick layer of ointment or cream and cover with 100% cotton gloves or socks at bedtime
- If excessive moisture from sweating is a problem, use baking powder and apply to problem areas and dust off excess

Cleansers and Moisturizers

There are millions of soaps, cleansers, and moisturizers on the market. Below are guidelines for picking over-the-counter skin care products:

CLEANSERS	MOISTURIZERS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pH balanced soap or soap free • Natural or cleansers with minimal to no preservatives • Rinse with warm, not hot, water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should not include alcohol • Urea and lactic (alpha-hydroxyl) acid in higher concentrations may sting when first applied • Preparations with lanolin, perfumes, and dye may irritate sensitive skin

Skin Care Don'ts

- Don't neglect new areas of dryness, irritation, or skin discomfort
- Don't soak for more than 10 minutes in the bathtub
- Don't bathe in very hot water
- Don't use abrasive washcloths on your skin
- Don't apply lotions, creams, or ointments between toes and around nails
- Don't use lanolin, coal tar, or petroleum-based products if you have sensitive skin
- Don't use cleansers or moisturizers with alcohol or an extensive list of preservatives
- Don't apply tape to dry, fragile, or sensitive skin- wrap with gauze whenever possible (if unable to avoid tape, be sure to apply skin sealant or protectant to the area to be taped and allow it to dry)
- Don't pull any tape off of skin- this puts stress on delicate skin

When Should I Have Someone Look at My Skin?

If you are experiencing changes in your skin and can answer “yes” to any of the questions below, you may benefit from the advice of a professional trained in skin care.

- Do you have a new wound that you do not know what caused it?
- Do you notice a sore area that has more redness and warmth than the skin nearby?
- Do you notice a new blister formation or purplish discoloration?
- Do you have a wound that has not been healing after two weeks of treatment?

If you have experienced any of these issues, you should contact your healthcare provider or you can contact one of ProCare's wound care clinics.