

Why skin care matters

Healthy skin protects against infection, helps regulate temperature, and supports wellbeing.

Dry or damaged skin can lead to soreness, pressure ulcers and infection.

Five things you should know about keeping skin healthy

1. Keeping skin healthy is important for pressure ulcer prevention.
2. Once the skin breaks down, it is at even higher risk of further damage.
3. As people age, the skin changes, making it more vulnerable to damage. It may become dry, paper thin and itchy.
4. Fluid from incontinence, sweating and wound fluid can irritate skin and make it more prone to breakdown.
5. Red areas, or on darker skin, areas that are darker than usual, may indicate a breakdown is imminent.



Keeping skin healthy

For dry skin:

- a. Apply a moisturiser (cream or ointment) regularly to soften the skin, reduce scaling and ease itching. Apply in a downward direction.
- b. Do not use excessive amounts of skin cream.
- c. Skin should be patted dry, not rubbed.
- d. Do not use traditional soaps and avoid creams that can irritate the skin.
- e. Ensure an adequate fluid intake, aim for 1.5 litres per day.

For moist skin

- a. Use barrier spray or cream to keep fluid away from the skin.
- b. Seek advice if the cause is profuse or prolonged diarrhoea.
- c. Use incontinence products when required.
- d. Ensure chairs / cushions being sat on don't cause skin to heat up and become moist.

Keep creams and sprays safe

- Store away from children and pets
- Check expiry dates
- Only keep creams and sprays for as long as they stipulate once opened

How to check your skin for changes in moles and blemishes

Step 1: Prepare

- Stand in a well-lit room.
- Use a full-length mirror and a hand-held mirror (diagram overleaf).

Step 2: What to Look For

- New spots or moles.
- Changes in size, shape or colour.
- Sores that don't heal.
- Itching, bleeding or crusting.

Step 3: Check All Areas

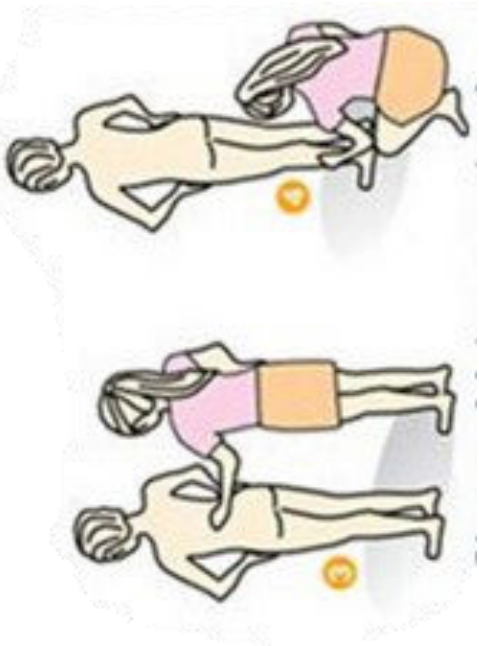
- **Front and back of body:** Face, neck, chest, abdomen.
- **Arms and hands:** Palms, between fingers, under nails.
- **Legs and feet:** Soles, toes, nails.
- **Hidden areas:** Scalp, behind ears, under breasts, buttocks, genitals.

Step 4: Use the ABCDE Rule

- **A**symmetry
- **B**order irregularity
- **C**olour variation
- **D**iameter > 6mm
- **E**volving (changing over time)

Step 5: When to Seek Help

If you notice anything of concern, contact your General Practitioner (GP).



Diagrams 3 & 4 are examples of two people checking skin.

Diagrams from cancergld.org.au



Diagrams 1 & 2 are examples of a person using a full length mirror and hand held mirror to check their own skin.

How to contact us

Telephone: (01534) 497603

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**Family Nursing
& Home Care**

Skin care matters



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