

CARING FOR YOUR SKIN



If you have any English language difficulties, please ask staff to book an interpreter.

From home contact the Telephone Interpreter Service on 13 1450.

Services are provided free of charge. Ask staff if this information is available in your preferred language.

What is skin integrity?

Skin integrity means keeping skin healthy and undamaged. Maintaining the integrity of our skin is vital to our physical and psychological health and our overall well being.

Skin :

Skin is the largest organ of the body and has many functions it:

- Maintains a physical barrier against the outside environment.
- Helps to control body temperature and maintain fluid balance
- Responds to sensations such as touch/pain
- Communicates our individuality by its texture, colour and characteristics
- Discourages bacterial growth with its neutral pH balance of 4.5 - 5.5

As skin ages, it:

- Becomes thinner
- Loses elasticity and moisture
- Is more easily injured
- Is slower to heal

Dry and damaged skin is more prone to injury and provides an easy entrance for bacteria which could cause infection.

Daily skin care is very important

Make it a part of your daily routine.

Examine your skin daily

- Check for signs of broken skin, redness, itching, flaking and weeping
- Pay special attention to skin folds and bony areas. I.e. under breasts
- You may need help to inspect skin
- See your doctor if concerned

Throw away the soap

- Soaps dry the skin and increase skin pH
- Use a cleanser which is designed to maintain normal pH. Look for the words '*non-soap*' or '*pH balanced*'

Your chemist will be able to assist you

Use a moisturiser daily

- Use one that suits your skin
- Avoid fragrances and unnecessary additives as skin rashes and sensitivities can develop

Check nails and between toes

- Treat fungal infections quickly
- Keep nails short and clean

Eat a varied and healthy diet

- If you have diabetes, ensure your sugar levels are well maintained

Drink enough fluids

- This is important for overall health, as well as skin
- Protect delicate skin from damage. Wear long sleeves and trousers
- Some medications can lead to thinning and drying of skin. Daily skin care becomes more important
- Keep active – exercise daily to improve circulation and maintain strength
- Protect skin from the sun

When incontinence is a problem

Urine and faeces can damage the skin quite quickly causing redness, irritation and pain.

- Choose continence products carefully so they fit well, feel good and are secure against leakage
- Clean the skin promptly following an episode of incontinence
- Be gentle - cleanse the skin with care and pat dry. Do not rub
- Use special continence skin care products to clean and protect the skin
- Seek professional help

National Continence Helpline - Freecall 1800 330 066

For further information

Eastern Health call centre 1300 342 255

Information in this brochure is a guide only and is not to be used instead of medical advice

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5 Arnold Street, Box Hill, Victoria 3128
1300 342 255

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