

## Patient information

# Basic skin care: DVT clinic

### Skin

The skin is the largest organ of the body and like every other organ it is prone to suffering with a few problems of its own.

As we get older our skin structure deteriorates, it becomes less elastic, less plump and does not retain moisture so well.

Older skin is more prone to breakdown either due to injury, medications, or other underlying health issues.

There are ways in which we can minimise the damage to our skin and prevent long term complications such as ulceration and skin infections (eg cellulitis).

### Things that can impact on skin

- Environment: exposure to chemicals, working outdoors etc.
- Cleansing products: personal and industrial.
- Sunlight: UVA and UVB rays, prolonged exposure will age the skin and potentially lead to skin cancer.
- Age
- Medical conditions: heart failure, diabetes and allergies.

## **Basic skin care**

- Ensure that you wash your skin regularly: when showering or bathing, pat the skin dry rather than rubbing the skin to prevent friction damage to the skin.
- When showering or bathing, reduce the use of fragranced soaps/shower gels, use those with a neutral pH balance.
- When showering or bathing ensure the water is warm and not hot.
- Reduce the number of showers or baths: obviously a good standard of hygiene needs to be maintained so wash those areas daily if required.
- Moisturise your skin daily: ideally four times a day if you suffer with particularly dry skin. Moisturise after showering or bathing as this will help to retain the body's natural level of moisture. Use unperfumed emollients.
- When using an emollient, always apply in the direction of the hairs in a stroking motion this will help to prevent hair follicles from becoming clogged up and potential infection.
- Stop smoking
- Reduce the exposure to direct sunlight
- Remain well hydrated
- Eat a balanced diet to help maintain good cell repair
- If you are diabetic, make sure you attend your podiatrist or chiropodist appointments to detect early problems with your feet and toenails.

## **Choice of emollients(moisturiser)**

The choice of what moisturiser to use can be a nightmare. The best of choice of emollient will depend very much on the skin type of the individual and whether they have any underlying skin problems. The choice will also be dependent on the ability of the person to apply it. Your local pharmacist will be able to help you make a choice of the emollient best suited to your needs and abilities.

Emollients come in various preparations:

- creams
- ointments
- lotions
- sprays
- bathing preparations with built in moisturisers

Avoid perfumed moisturisers: if in doubt speak to a pharmacist who can advise you as to the best emollient for you.

For further information on general skin care consult the NHS website [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk).

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)*

<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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