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7 Skin Care Tips for Lymphedema Patients

Skin is the organ that comes in contact with the rest of the world. It holds fluids in, prevents dehydration, and keeps harmful bacteria out. When managing lymphedema, paying close attention to your skin will not only help to reduce the risk of infection but will also make you aware of any significant changes with your condition. Here are a few tips to keep your skin healthy and happy.



1 Stay Clean, Keep Dry

Keep extremities clean and dry, taking extra care to dry feet thoroughly, especially between toes.



2 Slather it On!

Apply emollients and moisturizers daily to prevent chaffing and chapping. Stay away from lotions with added ingredients such as fragrance or alcohol.*



3 Nail care

Keep your fingernails and toenails well maintained. If you're in doubt about an issue with your nails, or have particular sensitivities, see your podiatrist or clinician for support.



4 Be careful!

Nicks or cuts from a razor can be problematic. Avoid them by exercising caution!



5 Cover up!

Wear gloves during activities that increase the risk of skin injury, such as washing dishes or gardening.



6 Respond promptly!

If you incur an injury, clean the area right away with soap and water. Once the area is clean, apply topical antimicrobial ointment and alert your lymphedema therapist.



7 Pay attention to your skin!

If you see something, say something. A health care professional should be involved immediately if there is any rash, itching, redness, pain, increased skin temperature, increased swelling, fever, or flu-like symptoms.

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*Ensure your lotion is dry before putting on your garment

Smith, Robyn A. (2018, Spring). Living Well with Lymphedema: Skin Care Secrets. Pathways, 12-14

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