

ROUTINE SKIN CARE

Skin that is healing, or skin affected by dermatitis or eczema often appears shiny. This means that the normal protective top layer of the skin is missing or damaged.

You can protect damaged skin by using the routine on this page. Your body will gradually restore the skin to its usual thickness. This may take 4-6 weeks. Restored normal skin looks dull rather than shiny. This provides better protection from infection or allergic reactions.

Most of us use too much soap, and shower more often than we need to. This may damage the skin. Drying yourself roughly with a towel may also remove some of the top skin layer.

How to reduce skin drying, dermatitis and infection

When bathing or showering:

- Cut back on how often you bathe or shower. A short shower (3 minutes) is better for your skin than a bath.
- Don't use antiseptic solutions.
- Don't use soap. If you need to use something, chose a soap substitute such as sorbolene. It cleanses the skin and comes off in the shower.
- Use a simple sorbolene based-cream on your skin **before** showering **and** straight **after** drying, especially on healing or dry areas. Sorbelene acts as a barrier that protects your skin. It also moisturises your skin.
- Don't use a cream that has Vaseline, perfumes or other additives. Your may be irritated by these.
- Pat your skin gently with a towel to dry yourself. Avoid rubbing.
- Clean and cover any skin cuts or grazes.
- Don't pick or bite fingernails or the skin around the nails.
- Keep your fingernails clipped short and clean to reduce damage to your skin by scratching.

Simple Options for Itchy Skin

- Use the skin care routine above. This can make a real difference to itchiness.
- Don't use perfumed creams on the skin – these can cause allergy
- Gently massage sorbolene-based cream into itchy areas instead of scratching them.
- Keep your fingernails short.
- It can be helpful to wear cotton gloves at night to stop you from scratching and damaging your skin.
- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about whether a long-acting non-sedating antihistamine would be suitable for you.
- Evening primrose oil capsules are a way to add essential fatty acids to your diet which can help the skin. Although there is limited evidence for an effect, some people find these help with reducing itch and improving excema.

Adapted with permission from: <https://aimed.net.au/2015/03/07/cellulitis-101-importance-of-routine-skin-care/>