

SKIN CARE

The skin is the first line of defense against external pathogens and environmental hazards that can potentially harm the body. It is important to keep your skin healthy, undamaged, and moisturized to prevent infection. Individuals with lymphedema who have damaged and unhealthy skin are more prone to infections that could lead to more swelling. Maintain a regular skin care routine with these tips.

WATCH FOR INFECTION

Watch the skin for any signs of infection. These could include a rash, red blotches or streaks, swelling, white, yellow or green discharge (pus) coming from a cut, increased skin warmth or tenderness, chills, or fever. Immediately report any signs of infection to your medical team.

PROTECT AND MOISTURIZE SKIN

- Keep your skin clean using mild soap and warm (not hot) water. Never bathe or shower while wearing compression garments or wraps. Always dry your skin well.
- Use moisturizers (such as unscented lotion, lanolin-based ointments, or cocoa butter) to keep your skin from cracking.

AVOID EXPOSURE

- Protect your skin from the sun. Use a broad-spectrum sunscreen (SPF 30). Try to stay out of the sun between 10am and 4pm when the UV rays are the strongest.
- Avoid exposure to extreme temperatures. Ice packs or heating pads can damage skin tissue and increase fluid build-up.



AVOID INJURIES

- All cuts to the head and neck area should be washed, treated with an antibiotic ointment, covered with a bandage, and monitored for infection.
- If you have pets, keep their claws trimmed to avoid scratches.
- Use insect repellents to prevent bites, which could introduce bacteria into your body.
- When grooming facial hair, electric razors, rather than razor blade, are a better choice. Care should be taken with waxing, electrolysis, or any other methods of hair removal that could cause a break in the skin.

