



OSU COMPREHENSIVE WOUND CENTER

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SKIN CARE

Skin, being an organ of the body, requires proper nutrients in order to remain healthy. Several disease processes work to diminish the body's ability to take care of the skin. Uncontrolled diabetes causes circulatory and nerve damage that can result in dry, cracked skin. Chronic swelling particularly that, which is associated with venous insufficiency, can cause the skin to be weepy, itchy and very susceptible to rashes and breakdown. Paralysis, poor mobility and prolonged pressure cause the skin to receive inadequate blood flow, and therefore inadequate nourishment to the skin.

Compromised skin offers a poor defense system, and therefore is very prone to breakdown. This breakdown often results in hard to heal wounds and the potential for serious infections, and therefore is most effectively managed with prevention i.e. good skin care.

Conditions such as diabetes, venous insufficiency and pressure often come with complications that make the skin very sensitive to external irritants. To reduce the chance of further irritation and skin breakdown, skin should be washed with mild soap and warm water. Do not soak compromised skin. Treat your skin gently, and avoid using rough washcloths. Moisturizing creams should be applied to dry skin after bathing. Avoid lotions or creams that contain alcohol, parabens or fragrances. These moisturizing creams should never be applied to open wounds or between your toes. Avoid the use of rubbing alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, iodine or antiseptic solutions on skin or wounds, unless instructed by your doctor.

Check your skin daily for dryness, cracks or redness, and give these the attention they need immediately. Do not scratch itchy areas, or apply tape to sensitive, fragile skin.

It is also important to remember that healthy skin receives its nourishment from you; therefore it is critical to eat a healthy, well balanced diet, and drink plenty of water.