

fact sheet

Caring for Your Skin During Cancer Treatment

Here are some ways to care for your skin during cancer treatment:

Be gentle. Use cleansing products made especially for sensitive skin or for people going through cancer treatment. Clean your skin gently, and wear soft fabrics. Don't use hot or cold packs unless your doctor says it's okay.

Stay moisturized. Shower in lukewarm instead of hot water. Limit showers to one a day, and apply a noncomedogenic moisturizing lotion on your skin throughout the day.

Practice sun safety. Ask your doctor if you should use sunblock every day. Cover your skin and wear a broad-brimmed hat when you go outdoors.

Care for skin rash. Tell your doctor if you develop an acne-like rash anywhere. A prescription cream or antibiotic may help. Ask if taking an additional pain-reliever would be safe.

Look after your fingernails and toenails. Skin around fingernails or toenails may become irritated from treatment, and some nails may become ingrown. Do not bite your nails, and avoid using fake nails or wraps. Wear gloves when doing chores like washing



dishes. Put petroleum jelly on your hands and feet, and cover them with cotton gloves and socks before bed.

Prevent pressure sores. If you spend a lot of time in bed or sitting upright, try to be active when you can. If you're unable to walk, exercise by moving your arms and legs.

If you feel pain during intravenous treatment, speak up. Drugs that are injected into a vein can leak out and damage skin. Your doctor will stop and clean the affected area. Be sure to follow instructions about how to care for the wound.

Keep your doctor updated about any skin changes. With some newer treatments, skin irritation may actually be a sign that the treatment is working. In any case, your doctor can suggest ways to effectively treat the skin condition.



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