



Pediatric Clinic
PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS
TREATING DRY SKIN

- The essence of dry skin care is: **Soak then Grease**. Hydrate the skin, then lock in the moisture.
- The patient can bathe as often as he or she wants; simply “grease up” afterwards to lock in the moisture. Bathing *without moisturizing afterwards* can lead to worsened dry skin.
- Apply a moisturizer frequently during the day. Moisturizers that are available in jars and can be scooped out with the fingers work best, including petroleum jelly and even vegetable shortening. Eucerin Cream and Nivia Cream are two recommendations.
- The temperature of the water has little to do with the hydration of the skin. Choose a comfortable temperature.
- The outer layer of skin (the stratum corneum) gets almost all its water from the exterior. Drinking water all day has little effect on skin moisture. But drinking a good amount of water daily is recommended for general good health.
- Soap removes fat from the skin and is not always necessary. Adequate cleansing can occur with plain water. Try soaping only the skin fold (intertriginous) areas.
- Staying in the tub a shorter time versus longer is of no benefit. The skin absorbs as much as it is going to within 10 minutes.
- Lathering in specific patterns or with special pads has little to do with skin moisture, although *harsh scrubbing can irritate the skin*.
- After the bath, dry the skin so that the skin remains moist. There is no special motion.
- Humidify the home or patient’s room.
- A normal, balanced diet is recommended. Extremes in diet leading to excess vitamins or malnutrition can affect the skin.

MANAGEMENT OF DRY SKIN INCLUDES:

1. Use of cool water (hot water removes protective oils from the skin).
2. Use of a mild soap or soap substitute.
Unscented **Dove** is readily available and is less drying than most soaps.
Other acceptable cleansers include:

Oilatum	Moisturel Cleanser
Aveeno (bar)	Oil of Olay for Sensitive Skin (bar)
Keri (bar)	Purpose (bar)
Basis	PhisoDerm
Cetaphyl lotion (cleanser)	

Some soaps are formulated to rinse completely (with very little residue). These include Neutrogena and Purpose. These soaps are good for people with skin easily irritated by perfumes and additives, but they may be drying.

3. Use soap only on necessary areas. Most of the skin surface needs only to be rinsed with water. This will help to protect the skin's natural oils. Some patients prefer to wash the face, underarms, groin and feet with a mild soap, and to use Cetaphyl to wash other areas of skin.
4. Avoid rubbing and scrubbing. Avoid the use of a washcloth.
5. Use a moisturizer. **A vanishingly thin layer of petroleum jelly (such as Vaseline) is highly effective** (and considerably cheaper than most other products). **Emollients are best used after the skin has been exposed to water**, such as after hand washing, or after bathing or showering. At night, dab a moist cloth over the skin before applying a moisturizer.
6. There are many other products available on the market for use on dry skin. Most are acceptable. Some contain ingredients such as urea or lactic acid. These ingredients draw water to the surface of the skin. In general, cream versions of moisturizers perform better than lotions.

Acceptable products include:

Eucerin cream
Cetaphil cream
Moisturel cream
Crisco shortening

Aveeno cream or lotion
 Neutrogena Moisture
 Curel

Dry Skin Regimen I:

1. Soak for 20 minutes in tepid water. Never add bubble bath, soap or bath salts to the water.
2. After the 20 minute soak, quickly wash and rinse any dirty areas (using a mild soap). Rinse thoroughly.
3. Apply a moisturizer within 3 minutes of getting out of the water.

Dry Skin Regimen II:

1. Short showers (about 30 seconds). This will also help to preserve the skin's protective oils.
2. Apply moisturizer.

Note:

When applying moisturizers and medications given to you by your doctor, you will usually be instructed to apply the medication to your skin first, then the moisturizer.

Also, when applying moisturizer to dry skin, moisten skin first with a damp washcloth, then apply the moisturizer on the moistened skin.