

Skin care for legs



Patient Information

This leaflet is for people who may be at risk of developing skin problems on their legs. It gives information on how you can care for your skin to reduce the risk of this happening.

What is the role of the skin?

Your skin provides many functions, including temperature regulation and protection, therefore it is important to maintain your skin in a healthy condition.

What are the benefits of good skin care?

Good skin care will help to:

- reduce the risk of infection
- maintain a healthy skin condition
- reduce the risk of an ulcer occurring or reoccurring

What problems should you look for?

Look for the following problems and report them to your nurse or healthcare professional as soon as you can:

- **Colour** – unusual changes in the colour of your skin
- **Scratches** – if you knock or catch your leg on anything and cause skin damage
- **Blisters** – from wearing uncomfortable or ill-fitting shoes
- **Temperature** – if your skin feels unusually hot or cold
- **Moist skin** – if your leg is swollen water may leak through the skin and make your skin moist
- **Dry and flaky skin** – which is not improved by using a moisturiser

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Great Western Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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What else can you do?

- Make sure you cut your nails so they do not have any sharp edges. If necessary see a Chiropodist.
- Pay particular attention to washing your feet and legs. Avoid perfumed soaps and dry your skin very carefully paying particular attention to skin folds and between your toes.
- Use a moisturiser regularly. Bedtime is a good time to do this if you take off your compression stockings at night. If you have not been prescribed or recommended a suitable moisturiser please ask.
- Always wear footwear and avoid walking barefoot.
- Avoid insect bites by using a good repellent. Treat any insect bites quickly and ask for advice.

Remember to ask for advice from your nurse or healthcare professional quickly if:

- You have any cuts, grazes, blisters and bruises
- Your leg becomes unusually hot or more swollen. In this case do not try to put on your compression stockings

What may contribute to dry skin?

- **Dehydration** – try and make sure you drink at least 2 litres of water a day unless you have been told differently by a healthcare professional
- **Smoking** – avoid smoking if possible. If you would like help with stopping smoking please contact your surgery to arrange an appointment to discuss.
- **Exposing your skin to sunlight** – Make sure you protect your legs from the sun. If you take off your compression stockings in the sun always use a sun block.

Safeguarding

Wiltshire Health and Care has a strong commitment to care that is safe, of a high quality and that upholds our patients' rights. All our patients have the right to live lives free from abuse or neglect and, where they are able, to make or be supported to make informed decisions and choices about their treatment, care and support. Where patients are not able to make their own decisions, Wiltshire Health and Care staff are committed to ensuring that treatment, care and support is undertaken in accordance with the person's best interests. In order to fulfil these commitments, Wiltshire Health and Care follow the Safeguarding principles and responsibilities laid out in Sections 42-46 of the Care Act (2014) and are informed by, and apply, the guiding principles and provisions of the Mental Capacity Act (2005).

If you or your carer have any concerns about abuse, neglect or your rights in relation to care provided by Wiltshire Health and Care or any other agency or individual, please raise this directly with any Wiltshire Health and Care staff or contact the Safeguarding Adults Team by telephone on: 0300 4560111.

Regarding children, WHC is responsible for providing services in accordance with Section 11 of the Children's Act (1989) and works under the principles of Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

Wiltshire Health and Care Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any questions, or concerns, suggestions or compliments about our service, please speak to a member of staff.

This information sheet is available in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 0300 1237797 and PALS.wiltshirehealthandcare@nhs.net