

# Skin Care for People with Lymphedema

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## Recommendations for general skin care

- **Wash your compression garment** every 1-2 days. If it is soiled, wash the garment daily, **or** alternate several pairs of clean garments to avoid excessive moisture or bacteria fungal buildup.
- **Wash your limb or wound daily** with a basic unscented/uncolored **liquid** soap, like dial.
- **Apply a lotion or cream** within 10 minutes after showering to maximize skin hydration. Moisturizer should be basic, unscented, and uncolored.
- **Attention to nail care** is important; do not cut your cuticles. You may need a podiatrist to care for your nails if you are diabetic.
- **Use sunscreen and insect repellent** when outside to protect your skin.
- **Use electric razors** if you need to shave in the affected area.
- **Avoid extreme temperature changes.**
- **Avoid nicks, punctures, scratches and skin irritation.** If these occur, wash with soap and water and observe for signs of infection.
- **Observe for signs of infection.** These include:
  - Redness
  - Rash
  - Itching
  - Pain
  - Increased skin temperature
  - Increased swelling
  - Fever or flu-like symptoms
  - If any of these signs occur, **contact your doctor immediately.**

## Recommendations for foot care

- **Avoid walking barefoot** in public places. This decreases your risk of fungal infection (i.e. athlete's foot) and reduces your chance of an injury to your feet, like cuts and scrapes.
- **Always wear clean dry socks.** If your socks become wet or dirty, wash and dry feet especially between toes, and change your socks and shoes.
- **Apply lotion or cream** to dry, cracked skin and feet.
- **Wear shoes** or hard sole slippers in the home to protect feet.
- **Check skin** (including the bottom of the feet) daily to inspect for damage, redness or sores, use a mirror if needed.

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