

Daily Skin Care

1. Have the person you care for decide when is the best time for you to look at their skin, for example before routine bathing, just before going to bed, or perhaps when first awakening in the morning.
2. You will need the following equipment:
 - a. Skin moisturizing lotion
 - b. Moisture Barrier Cream or Skin Wipe
 - c. Waterproof pad or briefs
 - d. Basin with warm water, soap and washcloth and towel
 - e. Small pillow or towel
 - f. Skin care diary
3. Be sure you have good lighting in the room.
4. Wash your hands for 15 seconds. Have the person remove their clothing and socks or have them wear loose fitting clothes easy to remove.
5. Keep the person covered with a light sheet in bed or in a chair.
6. Follow a Routine – for example, begin with the front of the body, and then move to the sides and back. Look at all skin surfaces, especially the area of the skin over bony parts of the body, like the knees, back of head or ears, the shoulder blades, elbows, heels and tailbone.
7. This chart shows you the sites where pressure ulcers easily form
8. Look all over the front of the body. Check the knees, chin, and face.
9. Have the person turn onto their side so you can check the ankles, knees, hips, shoulders, and ears.
10. Look at their back to check the hip, tailbone, and back of head.
11. Have the person turn to other side and repeat.
12. If the person is over weight and has large skin folds, look between the folds carefully, especially under the breast and the stomach folds.
13. As you look at the skin, look for:
 - a. Obvious damage to the skin like a cut or skin tear
 - b. Areas of roughness and dryness
 - c. Look for redness or change in color of the skin. Redness is an early sign of too much pressure. Some redness is normal but do this simple test.
 - i. When you see an area of redness, take your finger and gently press against the skin, making a fingerprint. Normally the skin will turn white but then return to red when you remove your finger. This is called blanching.
 - ii. If the skin stays red and does not turn white – this means early injury to the skin.
14. If you find an area of the skin that stays red and does not blanch, the first thing to do is have the person stay off that area. Then return in about 30 minutes to see if the redness disappeared.
15. Keep an eye on any area of redness or damage each time you check the skin. If the redness stays for more than a day, or a skin tear or abrasion does not heal in 3 to 4 days, you need to call the person's doctor.

16. Special situations when you need to look at the skin closely.
 - a. If the person has a cast, look around the cast edges for redness.
 - b. If the person has a urine catheter, feeding tube or drainage tube, look for redness where the tube exits the body/skin. Also look for drainage – this might mean infection.
 - c. If the person has frequent diarrhea or is incontinent of urine, look at the skin around the person's private parts. Unless you are a spouse or partner, most persons feel more comfortable having a person of the same sex do this.
17. Keep the skin clear and dry. Not everyone needs a daily bath. An older adult with dry skin needs a bath only once every few days.
18. Bathe the skin whenever the skin becomes soiled, for example from urine or excess sweat.
19. Use a mild cleansing soap like Dove or Ivory and warm water to bathe the skin. Do not use hot water as this dries the skin more.
20. Apply a moisturizing lotion after bathing. Do not rub or massage the skin over areas of redness or bony parts of the body, like the hips, tailbone, heels or shoulder blades. Rubbing may damage the skin. Simply apply moisturizer smoothly and evenly.
21. Have the person begin a regular bowel and bladder program if they are incontinent, unable to control passing of urine or stool. They need to be able to get to the bathroom, use a bedpan, or use a bedside commode on a regular schedule.
 - a. Ask the person if he or she needs to go to the bathroom every 2 hours when they are awake.
 - b. Limit the amount of fluids the person drinks 2 hours before bedtime.
22. If a person cannot control their urine or bowels, wash and dry the skin as soon as it becomes soiled.
 - a. Use a thick layer of moisture barrier cream or skin wipes on the skin. (You can buy both at a medical equipment store and some drug stores)
 - b. Have the person wear waterproof pads or briefs that absorb moisture. Remember, a moist pad will soften the skin in a few hours. Change a moist pad as soon as possible. Then wash and dry the skin.
 - c. Remove damp clothing or bed linen as soon as possible.
23. If you do not want a person's skin to become overly dry. Use skin moisturizers and have a humidifier in the home.
24. Moving and positioning a person properly prevents skin injury.
 - a. A bed-bound person should turn and change positions at least every two hours.
 - b. Chair bound persons should be helped to change positions every hour. If a chair bound person can shift their weight, have them do so every 15 minutes.
 - c. When you turn a person on their side, do not place them directly on their hip.

- d. A 30 degree lateral inclined position is the best position. With the person on their side, move in front of them. Stand with your feet in a wide base of support. Bend your knees. Then place your hands under the person's lower hip and bring it slightly forward towards you.
 - e. Take a pillow or small towel folded in half to pad bony parts of the body. Place a pillow for example between the knees and ankles so they do not contact or rub against each other.
 - f. Keep the person's head at or below 30 degrees when lying in bed to reduce shear on the skin.
25. When moving a person up in bed, do not simply pull the person up in bed. This will cause friction against the skin.
- a. Instead lift the person up in bed. You can do this in 2 ways: Have the person help you move up or have a second person help you lift.
 - i. When the person is able to partially move
 - 1. Have the person lie flat in bed. Remove any pillow from under the head. Then have the person flex their knees.
 - 2. Next, stand on the side of the bed with your feet in a wide base of support. Place one arm under the hips and the other under the person's shoulders. Keep your knees bent.
 - 3. Count to three and on 3 have the person push up with their feet, lifting their hips and head, as you move him or her up in bed. Then reposition their head on the pillow.
 - ii. When the person is not able to move themselves.
 - 1. Two persons can move a person who weighs less than 200 pounds up in bed. If the person weighs over 200 pounds, you will need three persons for the move.
 - 2. Have the person lie flat with knees bent. Remove the pillow from under the head. Then have the person who is helping you lift, stand on the opposite side of the bed.
 - 3. Stand with a wide base of support and keep your knees bent.
 - 4. Place your arms together, under the hips and shoulders of the person you are moving.
 - 5. On the count of three move the person up as you lift their hips up off of the mattress. You may have to move more than once to lift them to the head of the bed. Replace their head on the pillow.
26. If you have to move a person up in bed frequently, talk with a medical supply store about purchasing a friction-reducing device that makes it easier to move a person up in bed.
27. Write in your diary any observations of changes in the skin.