



# Skin care

Information for people living in or visiting the residential aged care facility

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Your skin is the largest organ of your body. Having healthy skin that has no breaks or sores is important for good health.

Skin is a shield that stops germs. If it is dry or broken, it is easier for germs to enter your body and cause infections.

Your skin changes as you age. It gets thinner, can be easier to damage and takes longer to heal.

Take extra care to look after your skin to reduce problems like skin tears, infections, and pressure injuries (sores).

## Ways to care for your skin

- Check your skin each day. Look for changes like rashes, redness, dark areas, swelling, blisters or sores. Let staff know straight away.
- Use a soap-free body-wash or wipes that don't have added perfume. They are much better for your skin than soap and won't dry it out. You can buy these products at the supermarket or pharmacy.
- When you dry your skin, pat it gently. Don't rub it hard.
- Use moisturiser on your skin twice a day as dry skin is easy to damage.
- If you have trouble with continence (wetting or soiling your pants) – use absorbent pads and barrier cream or wipes to help prevent skin damage.
- Don't rub the skin over bony areas like hips, ankles, or tail bone (sacrum).
- Tell staff if your skin is dry or itchy. This isn't normal and should be treated.
- Avoid using tapes (like sticking plasters) on your skin. They can cause damage.
- Change your position when you are sitting in a chair or lying in bed. Even small moves help to stop damage to your skin.
- Eat healthy food (fruit and vegetables) and have plenty of drinks (unless you have a fluid limit).
- Protect yourself from the sun with a hat, long sleeves and use sunscreen.



## Working together

You, your family and friends are important members of the care team. You know what is normal for you.

Let staff know if you notice any changes or damage to your skin. Don't wait to see if you get better – it is always best to get help early.

Working together with staff can help to keep you healthy. Talk to staff and ask questions. They need your help to give you the best care.

## Questions to ask staff

- Can you help me check my skin?
- What are the best products to use on my skin?



## Want to know more?

Read about healthy ageing of skin on [Better Health Channel](https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/healthy-ageing-the-skin) <<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/healthy-ageing-the-skin>>.

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Available from the [Department of Health residential aged care information web page](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/residential-aged-care/participating-with-consumers)

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