

Promoting Healthy Skin

The basics of skin care

emollients emollients.... emollients

Teaching Notes

Photocopy and ask all staff to read the article within the pack entitled “helping older people to keep their skin healthy” prior to the teaching session

Photocopy pre-education and post-education emollient questionnaire No 1 (double sided) & No2 (double-sided) and ask all to complete No 1 prior to the teaching session – this should give a base line of knowledge on emollients

Introduction using notes

Presentation CD is in the pack

Discuss emollients using chart within the pack

Post- education questionnaire No 2 (double-sided) should now be completed

Discuss the article “helping older people to keep their skin healthy”

Remember to keep a register of all staff who have undergone the training session

Introduction

This presentation is on the “basics” of skin care with the emphasis on the importance of **healthy skin** and how you, who are in the forefront of assessing and caring for the patient/resident, can make a difference.

We must recognise that people are living longer and that the majority of our patients/ residents are in the “older person” category. You must be vigilant and recognise when the skin integrity is challenged the aging process is the most challenging of all.

As we age the skin becomes thinner and more fragile : process of cell renewal is slower : skin loses it’s elasticity : becomes dry : natural oils, secreted by the skin, are reduced - these oils help to lubricate the skin, maintaining flexibility, strength and most importantly – the **barrier** function.

Skin is the largest organ of the body and the most visible - it is made up of two main layers (slide 1)

- dermis
- epidermis

Five key functions

- barrier - this is the main function we will focus on in this session
- temperature control - conserves heat and conversely helps to cool us down
- sensory - each square centimetre of skin contains 200 nerve endings - touch, pain, hot, cold
- Vitamin D synthesis - this happens in the skin through a complex chemical action when the skin is exposed to UV light
- Communication and display - psychological and social standing is affected by how our skin looks and how we feel about it. This can have a profound effect on the Quality of Life of a person - young or old

Skin Assessment

An accurate skin assessment is important on admission you should consider the entire body If not immediate, it can be done when bathing or carrying our personal care. This should be an ongoing process

Using your basic senses - 4 out of 5 senses are used when assessing

touch - the skin will give vital information about the quality and warmth healthy skin should feel smooth, supple but **not** hot

think - is the skin

- dry and rough - consider the cause – losing moisture ?
fluid intake ?
- hot and smooth could indicate inflammation or infection
- skin turgor - what does it feel like - this is important especially in the elderly and although the elasticity of the skin is less - poor nutrition and poor fluid intake can be identified by this simple observation
- part the skin folds - look in the flexures – sub-mammary and groins
- check between the toes - may be site of entry of infection eg cellulitis - think of how many admissions to hospital for cellulitis

sight - the skin will provide visual clues especially if the person cannot communicate

signs to look for

- is the skin broken
- scratched
- are there any unusual lesions

smell - important to recognise

- poor hygiene - incontinence
- fungal infections can smell

listening - this will help you find out more about the person

- pain
- discomfort

Points to emphasis :

ASSESSMENT IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE

ENSURE ACCURATE DOCUMENTATION

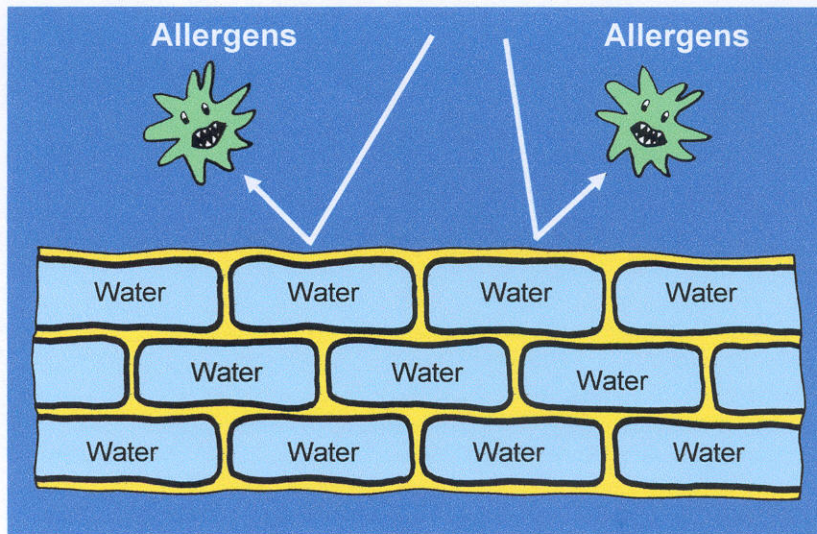
COMMUNICATING ANY ADVERSE FINDINGS TO THE MOST APPROPRIATE PERSON IS VITAL TO THE WELLBEING OF THE PATIENT/RESIDENT

ASSESSMENT IS AN ONGOING PROCESS - IT DOES NOT STOP ON ADMISSION

This is a pilot project in collaboration with you, the Care Commission of Scotland and NHS Fife – Dermatology Liaison Nurse Specialists, made possible by an educational grant from NHS Education for Scotland

Remember to register with the Care Commission Learning Network

Healthy skin



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Normal healthy skin

Looking at the top layer of skin which is known as the epidermis or the “cell factory” of the skin where cells develop through a number of stages until they form the stratum corneum

From base to surface this takes around 28 days.....much slower as the skin ages. The skin cells produce natural lipids which hold the skin cells together.

If we can relate this simply to a brick wall bricks are the cellsmortar, the natural lipids surface is intact, like a smooth coping stone on top of the wall what happens when the surface layer (stratum corneum/coping stone) is not intact there is a loss of barrier function

Skin Care



Emollients

Emollients are the most important part of any skin care

- **help to maintain barrier function**
- **have an intrinsic anti-inflammatory action**
- **used by dermatologists for over 5,000 years**