

Skin Conditions

Your skin can become dry and itchy or you may develop dermatitis while on therapy. Be sure to follow the injection guidelines. Avoid perfumes, cologne, and after-shave lotions and use mild detergents and soaps.

Wear loose cotton clothing. Avoid scratchy woolen and acrylic fabrics.

If Your Skin Is Really Itchy or Patchy

- > It's very possible you had a skin condition such as psoriasis or eczema before you started treatment, and the therapy exacerbated it. Report any existing skin problems such as psoriasis to your doctor before you start treatment.
- > Make sure that your doctor checks your liver and kidney functions—these organs directly affect your skin.
- > Discuss with your physician any medicines—including over-the-counter medicines—that you are taking. A drug might be causing your skin problem.
- > If skin problems persist, you may wish to consult a dermatologist.

Skin on the Outside Loves Water on the Inside

- > Drink lots and lots of water throughout the day.
- > Rotate your injection site every time to avoid an injection site reaction. No treatment for an injection site reaction is necessary, but you can try applications of cold or heat with your doctor's permission. Do not rub the area after your injection.
- > Stay out of direct sun exposure.
- > Stay away from hot tubs and saunas. Not only are these drying to your skin, but the heat drains you of energy and can deplete water from your system.
- > If you have acne, keep your skin as clean and dry as possible.
- > Avoid perfume, cologne, and after-shave lotion. These products often contain alcohol, which is very drying to your skin.

Helpful Tips—Baby Your Skin

- > Have short, lukewarm—not hot—baths and showers, avoid scrubbing, and pat your skin dry instead of rubbing. Or wrap yourself in a terry robe instead of using a towel to dry off after your bath or shower.
- > Wash clothes in mild detergent and double rinse to remove any soap that may remain.
- > Keep skin moist using moisturizing agents and bath treatments of oil or oatmeal.

- > During summer or hot weather, keep your environment humid. Invest in a humidifier if you can.
- > Apply cool compresses, or pressure, or gently rub or pat the area (rubbing/patting and itching/scratching are not the same).

Itching

- > Make a liquid paste out of cornstarch to relieve itching.
- > Use bath products that contain oatmeal.
- > Ask your doctor if you can apply a nonprescription hydrocortisone cream or an antihistamine.
- > Try not to scratch—scratching only makes your skin condition worse.

An Ounce of Prevention

There are many things you can do to prevent dry skin:

- > Keep your fingernails cut very short and wear soft mittens on your hands and socks on your feet, especially at night.
- > Stay out of the sun and all other hot places, including Jacuzzis, saunas, hot tubs, and steam baths. Heat only makes you itch more.
- > Try relaxation exercises or meditation. If you feel really itchy, try deep breathing while you are consciously forcing yourself not to scratch.
- > Keep a diary of what does and does not help your itching, or what actually aggravates it.
- > Wear loose cotton clothing. Avoid scratchy woolen and acrylic fabrics. Avoid tight-fitting clothing such as leggings, tights, panty hose, elastic socks (try cotton), and any stretch clothing (including jeans). These fabrics all contain synthetic materials that do not “breathe” and will make you hot, sweaty, and itchy.

This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical advice. Consult your health care provider for individualized information about your therapy. Your health care provider should be your primary source of information about your medical condition and treatment.