

Dry skin

Generally dry skin can be caused by:

- Increasing age.
- Family tendency.
- Low humidity.
- Heaters/air conditioners.
- Baths/showers - too long, too often, too hot.
- Some diseases - diabetes, thyroid, kidney, liver.

Avoiding the following can also help:

- Shampooing in the bath or shower (washing hair over a basin is best).
- Hot or restricting nightwear / bedding / clothes /underwear.
- Electric blankets.
- Wool, nylon against the skin.

Contact us

Phone 0800 739 432 Monday to Friday to book your appointment at one of the Auckland Sexual Health Clinics or visit our website www.ashs.org.nz for more information around opening hours.

Greenlane Clinical Centre
Building 7 Level 3
Greenlane West

South Auckland
12 Waddon Place
Mangere

North Shore
418 Glenfield Rd
Glenfield

West Auckland
Totara Health Level 2
1 McCrae Way
New Lynn

This fact sheet is designed to provide you with information on disease. It is not intended to replace the need for a consultation with your doctor. People are strongly advised to check with their healthcare provider about any specific questions or concerns. Every effort has been taken to ensure that the information in this pamphlet is correct at the time of publishing (2020).



Auckland Sexual Health Service

The facts about Genital Skin



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How to look after your genital skin?

Almost all conditions affecting genital skin will benefit by simple changes to routine skin washing:

- Avoid soap (see soap substitutes).
- Keep to short, warm, not hot showers, and bathing (too hot will increase itch, too long causes more dryness).
- Plain or salt water (1/4 teaspoon/1 cup or 1-2 teaspoons/litre of warm water). This is especially good if various creams and lotions have irritated the skin.

Genital first aid

Salt water baths, 1 handful in a shallow bath, soak for 10-15 minutes, 2-3 times a day.

Use if the skin is split, ulcerated, weepy or tender and swollen.

If urination is very painful, try passing urine in the bath, otherwise, coat the skin with zinc and castor oil cream or Vaseline and then try.

Pat dry gently and apply the medication or moisturiser immediately afterwards.

Bathing /soaking should usually stop after 3-4 days. Excessive soaks can over dry the skin.

Soap Substitutes

Soap substitutes can be used for otherwise intact but dry or irritated skin.

Aqueous or Sorbolene creams are cheap and effective. Apply before the area is wetted and rinse off lightly. A slight greasy film should remain.

Both are excellent moisturisers to be applied any time and very soothing if applied cold (refrigerated).

Specific shower/bath lotions or oils are more expensive but easier to apply. Examples include:

- Cetaphil
- QV
- Alpha-Keri