

Skin Care Tips

- Products containing urea, lactic acid or other alpha-hydroxy acids seem to help some individuals with ichthyosis. Some people get relief from pure lanolin, which is easier to spread when mixed with water. However, care must be taken when these agents are used in young infants since absorption through the skin can occur.
- A pumice stone rubbed lightly on thickened skin may help loosen crust. Try this when the skin is wet and soft.
- Give any new cream or lotion a decent trial. Sometimes a product needs to be used for two or three weeks before results are noticeable.
- Try adding a few ounces of pure glycerin to your cream or lotion, and the skin will stay moist longer. Glycerin bought by the gallon is less expensive than smaller bottles. Most pharmacists will gladly special order a gallon for you.
- To remove scales on the scalp, apply your favorite lotion and occlude with a shower cap or plastic wrap to bed. A morning shampoo, massage and brushing may help.
- Body odor can be a problem for people with ichthyosis. Regular bathing is helpful. Some individuals suggest adding two TEASPOONS of bleach or vinegar to one gallon of bath water may help. Carefully measure each gallon of water as you fill the tub and then mark the tub so that you can always fill the same amount. For example, add 30 teaspoons of bleach/vinegar to 15 gallons of water. The problem seems to come from bacteria trapped in the dead layers of skin.
- More baths are better. Water helps make dry skin easier to remove and makes people with ichthyosis more comfortable. Some people find salt and oatmeal baths soothing. ***Be sure to apply lotion or cream immediately after gently toweling dry.***
- If you have problems with yeast infections in the groin area or feet, wear cotton underwear and cotton socks and change them frequently when they get wet. Have your dermatologist prescribe the appropriate prescription medication for yeast or fungal infections. These problems need medical attention.
- Thick scale can sometimes harbor so much infection, causing bad odors, that an oral antibiotic may be needed. Some people remain on low doses of antibiotics for long periods to control infection.
- If you need to apply bandages, ask your pharmacist about some of the newest no-stick types.

- Natural fibers, such as wool or cotton, tend to wick moisture away from the body. You might consider cotton blends for clothing worn next to the skin. However, some people with ichthyosis find rayon and other synthetics to be very irritating.
- Air conditioning and heating can be very drying, especially for small children. Fresh air, fans and humidifiers may prove to be more comfortable, and can be used with a spray bottle filled with water to help keep kids cool in hot weather.
- Various cooling suits and devices are available for children and adults who cannot tolerate heat (*see Overheating Resource Sheet*). For more information, please contact FIRST's national office.
- Sunshine can work wonders for ichthyosis, but too much sun is dangerous. Always use a good sunscreen, when outdoors.
- New treatments are available for chicken pox (*see Chicken Pox Resource Sheet*). Ask your pediatrician or dermatologist about these before your child is exposed to the disease.
- Dryness around the eyes can be particularly bothersome for people with severe ichthyosis. Ask your dermatologist for assistance with this.
- Ear canals can be a problem when they become clogged with skin and wax. Be sure to have your child's hearing checked routinely and check with your ear, nose and throat specialist for ways to properly clean the ears.

FIRST has a booklet that contains more than 100 different lotions, creams, and other products that have been recommended by ichthyosis affected individuals and their families.

This information is provided as a service to patients and parents of patients who have ichthyosis. It is not intended to supplement appropriate medical care, but instead to complement that care with guidance in practical issues facing patients and parents. Neither FIRST, its Board of Directors, Medical & Scientific Advisory Board, Board of Medical Editors, nor Foundation staff and officials endorse any treatments or products reported here. All issues pertaining to the care of patients with ichthyosis should be discussed with a dermatologist experienced in the treatment of their skin disorder.



Foundation for
Ichthyosis & Related
Skin Types

PO Box 1067, Lansdale, PA 19446-0687
Phone: 800-545-3286
Website: www.firstskinfoundation.org
Email: info@firstskinfoundation.org

Improve lives and seek cures for those affected by ichthyosis and related skin types.

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