



Cleanse your skin regularly to keep it in good health

Regular cleansing of your skin is an essential part of your skin care routine and it is important to keep your skin in good health. Just be sure to take a gentle approach so you don't damage your skin in the process.

If you wear compression to manage chronic oedema (long-term swelling, including lymphoedema) or a venous leg ulcer, your skin may be fragile and more susceptible to damage as a result of the underlying problem with your venous and/or lymphatic systems. It is therefore important that you take good care of your skin to keep your skin as healthy as possible in order to protect it from breakdown and infection.

Healthy, supple skin acts as a protective barrier to the outside environment, protecting us from the harmful effects of chemicals, irritants and micro-organisms that can cause infection.

The barrier function of the skin is less effective when the skin is dry and irritated.

This can be caused by sun exposure, central heating and products that we use to cleanse and moisturise the skin.

It is important when caring for the skin that skin-friendly products are used. Some perfumed products can strip the skin, increasing dryness and irritation. Continued use can leave the skin red, cracked and vulnerable to breaks that can result in infection.

For this reason, pH neutral or skin-friendly pH products should be used. Fragrance free, bland products help to preserve the skin's barrier function.

Read on for a quick guide to cleansing your skin.



1 Be prepared

If you are unable to clean your legs in the shower or bath, you can use a bowl. First, clean a work surface with plenty of room. Next, get everything you need before you start: a clean bucket or bowl of warm tap water, a cloth for cleansing or Debrisoft®, your cleanser or emollient, and a towel to dry your legs. Wash your hands thoroughly and dry with a clean towel or kitchen roll before you start to wash your legs.



2 Wash your limb(s)

Carefully remove your compression garment (and dressing if you have a wound). Test the water temperature then carefully wash your limb(s) using a cloth to gently cleanse the skin and remove any dry skin and build-up of products. Remember to avoid using perfumed products which may dry and irritate your skin. Try to cleanse your limbs regularly – daily is ideal if possible.



3 Cleanse your wound (if present)

If you have a wound, it may contain dead skin and bacteria that needs removing. Gently rinse the wound to loosen any debris. If you have been prescribed or have access to Debrisoft® you can remove this with very little discomfort. Moisten the Debrisoft® with a small amount of tap water and use for at least 2 minutes. The pad should then be disposed of after use.



4 Dry

Towel dry your skin by gently patting and avoiding harsh rubbing which can result in damage. Ensure skin folds, e.g. between toes and behind knees are dry. 

