

# Skin Care and Diabetes

Your skin is your body's first line of defense against germs. But high blood sugar can make it harder for your skin to protect you from infections and heal from injuries. It's important to keep your skin healthy by taking good care of it and keeping diabetes under control.

## What Is Healthy Skin?

Healthy skin should:

- Be warm and flexible
- Not have redness, scrapes, irritation, or lumps
- Not be too dry or too oily
- Be able to feel a pinprick, cold, heat, and touch



### Caring For Your Skin

- **Keep your blood sugar under control.** This will help prevent poor blood flow and dry skin, which can cause skin problems.
- **Keep your skin clean**, especially in skin folds. Germs grow in warm, moist places like skin folds.
- **Keep your skin moist by using moisturizing lotions with no alcohol or fragrance.** This will help keep your skin from getting too dry or cracking, which could make it more likely to become infected.
- **Drink lots of water**, unless your doctor tells you not to.
- **Don't use harsh soaps or chemicals** on your skin or any wound. Harsh chemicals include things like alcohol, vinegar, or iodine.
- **Mucous membranes** are the moist linings in places like your nose, eyes, throat, and ears. They should be pink, moist, and warm. Tell your doctor right away if you notice any problems with your mucous membranes. Those could include pain, heat, cracking, peeling, itching, or having fluid come out of them.



### Caring For Wounds

- **Wash any cut or scrape right away** with warm water and mild soap, such as Ivory. Apply antibiotic ointment and a bandage if necessary. Contact your doctor if the wound is severe.
- **Cover the wound loosely.** Keep the bandage dry. Change the bandage when it is moist or when your doctor tells you to.
- **Do not use any sharp objects** to care for your wound.
- **Contact your doctor** if there is increased pain, swelling, or heat after three days.
- **If your wound smells or has fluid coming from it**, tell your doctor.



## Sun Safety

**Ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun, including UV-A and UV-B light, can damage your skin and eyes over time.** Too much exposure to the sun – even on cloudy days – can lead to wrinkles, skin cancer, and cataracts.

To protect your skin and eyes from the sun:

- Wear sunglasses that block both UV-A and UV-B light.
- Wear sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher every day.
- Stay out of the sun between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Wear a hat with a broad brim that covers your nose and ears.
- Wear protective clothing, such as shirts with long sleeves and long pants or skirts.



## Medicine and sunlight can be an unhealthy mix

Many common medicines can make you more sensitive to sunlight. Skin may turn red or burn even after a short time in the sun. Check the packages of all the medicines you take. If sun sensitivity is a side effect, it's even more important to protect yourself from the sun. Medicines that can cause sun sensitivity include:

- **Sulfonylureas** (diabetes medicines), such as Metformin
- **Some blood pressure medications**, such as Capoten, Adalat, and Procardia
- **Some arthritis and pain medicines**, such as ibuprofen, Relafen, naproxen (Aleve), and Clinoril
- **Some antidepressants and antipsychotics**
- **Some diuretics** (water pills)
- **Some cancer medicines**