### OLDER PERSON SKIN CARE PATHWAY

**Aim:** The aim of this pathway is to provide guidance on the appropriate management of the skin in older people. Adequate skin care is a major strategy for maintaining the skin barrier, skin integrity and skin health. For some people the use of routine leave on emollients (creams or ointments) will be adequate however this pathway provides guidance on skin that is at risk of further drying and dehydration. Untreated dry skin may become irritated and result in rashes, eczema, cellulitis and secondary bacterial infection.

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<th>Ageing skin</th>
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<th>Good Practice</th>
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| Dry         | Skin becomes thinner and more translucent. An increase in pigmented spots in sun exposed areas is common. Skin that is leathery in appearance is a sign of reduced elasticity. Skin bruises more easily. A decrease in the sweat gland activity reduces the amount of oil present in the skin which leads to dryness. | - Use Ointments rather than bland creams for dry skin as they keep the skin moist for longer.  
- Avoid over use of harsh soaps or chemicals as this removes the oil from the skin.  
- Zeroderm and Hydromol can be used as soap substitutes as well as emollients so you may not require a bath additive as well.  
- Aqueous cream is to be used as a soap substitute only.  
- Refer to the Emollient formulary fact sheet regarding suitable quantities/expiry dates.  
- Apply emollients in the direction of the hair line to avoid increased risk of infection.  
- Warm water Is less drying than hot water. |

| Dehydrated, very dry. | Very dry dehydrated skin. Skin that is not hydrated can develop fissures and cracks and become very painful. |  |
| Itchy skin | Dry skin is a common cause of itching in older people. |  |

1. Use a soap substitute / wash, bath or shower emollient such as Zerolatum bath additive, Zeroderm Ointment or Aqueous cream (Hospital only)

2. Apply a leave on emollient such as O Zeroderm ointment or Zerobase cream. If this is not effective consider Hydromol ointment, Cetraben cream or Doublebase gel. **Apply 3-4 x a day**

3. If the skin is very dehydrated then apply a Urea based leave on emollient - Balneum cream. **Apply ONCE a day**

4. Use Balneum Plus cream **TWICE daily** for itchy skin
References:


https://www.eclipsesolutions.org/Cornwall/info.aspx?sectionid=64