

Introduction

The main function of skin is a protective barrier against irritants, bacteria and fungus. Healthy skin is more acidic, which maintains this protective barrier. Episodes of urine leakage or stool soiling can damage the skin's natural barrier leading to dermatitis, a redness and irritation of the skin that can progress to skin breakdown. Incontinent Associated-Dermatitis (IAD) is the accepted term for skin damage caused by exposure to urine or stool, commonly referred to as diaper rash.

Areas of Exposed Skin That are Susceptible to Skin Damage:

- Genitals/private parts
- Inner thighs/posterior thighs
- Buttocks and the crease between the buttocks
- Groin
- Lower abdominal folds
- Hips

Symptoms That You May Notice

- Redness of the skin. In darker skin tones, the redness may be more subtle to white, or dark purple/red
- Itching and /or pain
- Open wounds/weeping skin
- Burning sensation
- Blisters or small raised reddened areas

Complications of Incontinence Associated-Dermatitis

- The moist, warm skin that is damaged from urine/stool is now vulnerable to infection with yeast and/or bacteria.
- Skin that is too moist is easily damaged by friction from aggressive cleaning and can lead to wound creation.

- Containment devices, such as diapers or disposable undergarments, can over absorb with urine and stool, staying in contact with the skin, and can lead to increase skin breakdown due to its moisture and heat trapping affects.
- Seek medical attention from your health care provider to have the skin evaluated if any redness and/or open wounds are noticed.

People That are at Risk For Skin Damage and Pressure Injuries

- Limited mobility (inability to get to the toilet in time)
- Medical conditions that require caregiver assistance for toileting
- Poor dexterity (unable to remove the undergarments in time)
- Taking medications for other illnesses
- Bed bound
- Wheelchair bound

Treatment of Incontinence-Associated Dermatitis

- Consider management of urinary/stool incontinence with diet, fluid management, or toileting techniques, addressing medications/dexterity issues/mobility with your health care provider.
- Routine toileting schedule, such as, going to the bathroom every two/ three hours throughout the day and before going to bed.
- Reduce skin exposure to urine/ stool by using appropriate body worn absorbent products, depending on the amount and type of incontinence that wick the wetness away from the skin, such as, bladder-controlled pads/liner, or protective underwear. For men, protective penis wraps/sleeves.

Care Of the Skin for an Individual with Incontinence

- At the time of urine or stool leakage, gently clean the skin with an all-in-one pH balance cleanser/wipe that can clean, moisturize and protect. These products can be found at your local grocery store or pharmacy.
- Pat the skin dry and avoid excess force to prevent further skin damage.
- Protect and promote skin health by using a barrier cream applied thinly so it does not interfere with the absorbency of the body worn product.
- If any redness is noted, contact your health care provider.

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