

Sensitive or Dry Skin

Many infants and children will experience sensitive or dry skin at some point in their lives. The treatment of the skin depends on the location on the dryness and the age of the child.

Infant's and children's skin becomes dry more easily than adult's skin because it is less "water proof". One way to avoid excessive dryness is to limit the time your child spends in the bathtub. A quick bath where you rinse, wash and then rinse the baby will get them clean, and minimize excessive water exposure. You can use a gentle unscented cleanser formulated for infants when the child is young. For older children, unscented Dove soap or Cetaphil cleanser are good choices.

Very young infants will frequently have peeling, dry skin at the wrists, ankles and across the chest or abdomen. This is a normal occurrence and does not require any specific treatment. It is okay to use an unscented lotion on all infants. We recommend unscented products because many infants' skin will become red and irritated from the "baby scented" lotions that are available. You can use an unscented lotion that is specifically marketed for infants. There are other, unscented lotions such as Curel, Vaseline Intensive Care, Eucerin or Cetaphil, which are appropriate for all ages. These lotions work just as well, and are safe for infants' skin. They can be applied head to toe as needed for dry or reddened skin.

If a moisturizing lotion does not relieve your child's dry skin after a week of routine use, an over the counter preparation of hydrocortisone (1/2 – 1%) can be very helpful. The use of a cream or lotion preparation is preferable to a gel. If possible, get the hydrocortisone with aloe added to it. This type of preparation stings less when applied. Hydrocortisone can be applied to all areas of the skin once or twice a day. It is useful to apply a moisturizing lotion over the hydrocortisone to further moisturize the skin. If you have tried these remedies, and are not seeing any improvement in one to two weeks, please make an appointment to have your child examined.

If your child's dry skin is accompanied by fevers, open sores or drainage, please call the office and make an appointment to have your child examined.