



# Feeling Itchy?

## Dealing with itchy or dry skin

### Tips to overcome itchy skin

- Be sure to finish all your dialysis treatments to help remove wastes.
- Follow your diet closely. Limit milk and other dairy foods to keep phosphorus low.
- Remember to take your prescribed phosphate binders every time you eat.
- Make sure you are not taking medicines or supplements that have vitamin A or magnesium.
- Keep your showers or baths short and use warm water instead of hot.
- Trim your fingernails often and try not to damage your skin by scratching. Try gently slapping your skin instead.
- See back of this sheet for a Peppermint Oatmeal Bath recipe that may soothe itchy skin.

If you have kidney disease, you may have itchy or dry skin. This irritating problem can happen for many reasons.

### Waste Buildup

A healthy kidney's job is to remove wastes from the blood. When your kidneys do not work as well, these wastes build up and stimulate the skin, making you itch.

### High Levels of Vitamins or Minerals

Just like wastes, vitamins and minerals can collect and bother your skin. To prevent itching, try to keep your phosphorus level below 6.0 mg/dl.

### Harsh Products

Many products that contact your skin may make your itching worse. Try switching to soaps, lotions, and laundry detergents made for sensitive skin. Check the label and stay away from irritants like protease, amylase, mannanase, or pectinase.

### Dry Skin

Glands in the skin that produce oil and sweat can waste away in people with kidney disease. This can dry out your skin and make itching worse.





## Peppermint Oatmeal Bath

1/2 cup oatmeal

Handful of fresh peppermint leaves OR four 100% peppermint tea bags OR 4-5 drops peppermint essential oil

1 teaspoon baking soda

Place all ingredients in a lukewarm bath (if you like, tie them in a small cotton cloth to keep your tub clean). Soak for 15-20 minutes to relieve itching. Pat dry and use moisturizer while your skin is still damp.

## Seal in the Goodness

Using a moisturizer every day can fight dryness by holding in your skin's natural moisture. Read below to decide which is right for you:

- **Oil Content**

Oils in moisturizers act like your body's natural oils to keep water in your skin. Lotions have the lowest amounts of these oils and are non-greasy. Creams are thicker and have more oils. Ointments contain the most oil and are great for dry skin, but they can be greasy. You may want to use an ointment at night and lotion or cream in the morning.

- **Ingredients**

Look for ingredients like urea, paraffin, lanolin, emulsifying wax, and coconut oil. Ingredients like polyethylene glycol, acid, and fragrance can irritate dry skin.

- **Cost**

You do not have to buy expensive skin care products to treat dry skin. Store-brand moisturizers and petroleum jelly can work just as well.

To save money, you can even use canola or olive oil as a moisturizer. Your skin will absorb healthy fatty acids from these oils too. Try adding a drop of essential oil if you do not like the smell.

Use a moisturizer at least once per day to relieve itching and dryness.

