Moisturiser: prevention of skin tears

**Intervention**

Twice-daily application of a pH-neutral, perfume-free moisturising lotion to body extremities.

**Indication**

Prevention of skin tears in frail elderly patients. The majority of skin tears in these patients occur on the arms (54%) and legs (40%).

Moisturising the skin of elderly people reduces the incidence of skin tears by almost 50%.

**Precautions**

Avoid lotion ingredients that may cause irritation such as:
- urea
- sodium lauryl sulphate
- fragrances

**Availability**

The lotion used in the main trial is Abena® Skincare Lotion Unscented, which costs around A$13 for 500 ml. Other similar lotions may be used.

The lotion should:
- be pH neutral
- contain a non-irritating humectant (eg glycerine)
- contain an occlusive agent (eg paraffin or plant oil).

Similar available lotions include Cetaphil® Moisturising Lotion, Cetaphil® Daily Advance Lotion, Alpha Ker® Skin Moisture Boost Lotion and QV® Skin Lotion. These may be purchased from pharmacies, supermarkets and online.

**Description**

Lotion is applied twice daily to the extremities in a gentle downward direction, preferably after bathing. It may be applied by patients (if able) or carers.

**Tips and Challenges**

This is cost-effective and simple therapy should be considered for all patients at risk of skin tears.

**Grading**

NHMRC level II

**References**