

Breast Health Centre

Preventing and Treating Skin Breakdown Under the Breasts

What is skin breakdown?

Skin breakdown happens when skin rubs together and traps moisture. The skin can be red and raw (irritated and tender to the touch) or just sore. Women are more likely to have skin breakdown under their breasts if:

- Their breasts are large and heavy.
- They had radiation or chemotherapy, or have diabetes.

It is more common in the summer, when the weather is hot and humid.

During a mammogram, women with skin breakdown under their breasts may experience skin tears.

How do I prevent or treat skin breakdown or tears?

DO:

- Gently wash your chest and breasts using a mild soap and warm (not hot) water.
- Gently pat your chest dry with a towel. Do not rub.
- Use the "cool" setting on your hairdryer to take away as much moisture as you can.
- Keep your chest area dry by putting a soft cotton cloth under the breasts. Change this cloth often.
- Consider using a medicated body powder that has menthol and zinc oxide.
- Wear cotton undergarments and clothes. Breathable fabric often helps to reduce moisture.
- When possible, allow the fold underneath the breast to air dry.

DO NOT:

- Use cornstarch, as it clumps and traps moisture.
- Use products with perfume.
- Use Vaseline[®] or cream, as these trap moisture.

See your doctor if:

- There is cloudy, bad smelling liquid (pus) oozing from the skin tears
- Other parts of the breast become tender and red
- The tears under the breast do not heal or worsen after 5 days.

English:This information is important! If you have
trouble reading this, ask someone to help you.Italian:Queste informazoni sono important! Se ha
difficoltà a leggere questo, chieda aiuto a qualcuno.Spanish:Esta información es important! Si tiene
dificultad en leer esto, pida que alguien le ayude.

ļ.

Breast Health Centre Medical Imaging Level 2 East Humber River Health (416) 242-1000 ext. 63600

 $[\]ensuremath{\mathbb C}$ 2021 Humber River Health. All rights reserved.

The information provided in this booklet is for educational purposes. It does not replace the advice or specific instructions from your doctor, nurse, or other healthcare provider. Do not use this information to diagnose or treat. If you have questions about your own care, please speak with your healthcare provider.