

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.

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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.