

Skin Care: Guidelines for Ensuring Skin Integrity



TEACHING PLAN

To use this lesson for self-study, the learner should read the material, do the activity and take the test. For group study, the leader may give each learner a copy of the learning guide and follow this teaching plan to conduct the lesson.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Understand the structure and functions of the skin.
- Understand what happens to the skin as people age.
- Understand how to care for elderly patients' skin and how to prevent skin problems.
- Be able to recognize and report skin problems.



ACTIVITY

Skin Care Jeopardy Game (Figure 44.1):

- Review the game answers and the learning guide so you are knowledgeable about the lesson content.
- The game answers may be read to the learners, or if you have time you can write each one on a separate sheet of paper and tack them to the wall behind cover sheets with the point values. Tack the answers and cover sheets in columns. Place a paper with the category name at the head of each column. The cover sheet can be removed when a learner chooses that category and point value, revealing the answer underneath.
- If you are reading the game answers, mark the numbers off the game categories chart as they are chosen.
- Prepare several small gift certificates or other inexpensive prizes, as it is possible that there will be more than one game winner. If prizes are not an option, use the award certificate included with this packet.
- If possible, enlist the help of another worker to keep score during the game.
- Remember that the point of the exercise is to learn the material in an interesting way, not to cause conflict. Keep the game fun and educational.

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Introduction:

1. Begin by explaining that this lesson will be taught in the form of a game similar to the television game show Jeopardy. The learners will be given answers. They must come up with the correct questions to match the answers.
2. Review the learning goals for the session.
3. Give everyone a copy of the learning guide. Allow the learners to spend a few minutes reading the material to prepare for the game.

The game

Explain the rules of the game:

1. Each learner will take a turn as a “contestant.”
2. By turns, each contestant will choose a category and a value. For example, “Skin Functions for 30.”
3. The answer to the question will be read, and the first person to call out the correct question to match the answer given will receive the assigned point value. If preferred, ask learners to raise their hands and be recognized. Learners may refer to their learning guide for help in formulating the correct question.
4. The learner with the most points at the end of the session will receive an award.

Use the game as an opportunity for teaching. Expand upon the information presented in the game as needed, giving illustrations that are specific to your agency.

Make sure everyone understands both the answers and the questions and is able to find the appropriate material in the learning guide.



THE LESSON

Review the material in the lesson with participants. Allow for discussion.



CONCLUSION

Have participants take the test. Review the answers together. Award certificates to those who answer at least seven (70%) of the test questions correctly.



TEST ANSWERS

- | | | | |
|----------|---------|----------|----------|
| 1. False | 4. b | 7. False | 9. True |
| 2. d | 5. c | 8. a | 10. True |
| 3. d | 6. True | | |

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FIGURE 44.1 | SKIN CARE JEOPARDY

100 points	90 points	80 points	70 points	60 points	50 points	40 points	30 points	20 points	10 points
Skin Structure	Skin Functions	Aging Skin	Skin Care	Skin Problems					
10 points	10 points	10 points	10 points	10 points					
20 points	20 points	20 points	20 points	20 points					
30 points	30 points	30 points	30 points	30 points					
40 points	40 points	40 points	40 points	40 points					
50 points	50 points	50 points	50 points	50 points					
60 points	60 points	60 points	60 points	60 points					
70 points	70 points	70 points	70 points	70 points					
80 points	80 points	80 points	80 points	80 points					
90 points	90 points	90 points	90 points	90 points					
100 points	100 points	100 points	100 points	100 points					

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FIGURE 44.1 | SKIN CARE JEOPARDY (CONT.)

Skin Structure	Skin Functions	Aging Skin	Skin Care	Skin Problems
10 points The top layer of the skin	10 points Vitamin D	10 points Get thinner with age	10 points Don't disturb these	10 points Swelling
20 points Nerves	20 points By lubricating the skin	20 points It becomes wrinkled	20 points Pat, don't rub	20 points Every two hours
30 points Organs that create hair	30 points The skin covers and pads them	30 points This is caused by the oil glands producing less oil	30 points Inspect the skin this often	30 points Body fluids that contain chemicals harmful to the skin
40 points The dermis	40 points By releasing heat through sweat	40 points Becomes slower with age	40 points Frequent bathing with soap	40 points Pressure points
50 points Oil glands	50 points Danger	50 points Becomes less stretchy	50 points Nutritious food & water	50 points Keep it wrinkle-free
60 points Layer of fat under the skin	60 points Forms a barrier against harmful organisms and infection	60 points Because the skin loses its ability to control temperature	60 points To improve circulation and prevent pressure sores	60 points Sustained pressure on blood vessels prevents cell nourishment
70 points Blood vessels	70 points Pressure, pleasure, pain, and temperature	70 points Because they get thinner and more delicate	70 points Things that should be kept dry	70 points Move people carefully in bed to avoid this
80 points Sweat glands	80 points Changes that may warn of disease	80 points Because the skin is dry, thin, and fragile	80 points Do this, but not directly on irritated areas	80 points Pillows
90 points Padding to prevent injury and insulation to stay warm	90 points They constrict and expand to warm or cool the body	90 points These are carried by the blood in the blood vessels	90 points Use one sparingly and the other liberally	90 points Residents with little or no feeling in parts of the body
100 points Structures that are contained in the dermis	100 points Six things the skin does	100 points Five results of aging skin changes	100 points Five things that should be reported to a nurse	100 points One hour

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FIGURE 44.2 | SKIN CARE JEOPARDY: ANSWERS

10 points	20 points	30 points	40 points	50 points	60 points	70 points	80 points	90 points	100 points
10 points What is the epidermis?	20 points What are fibers that carry sensations to and from the brain?	30 points What are hair follicles?	40 points What is the thicker layer of skin under the surface?	50 points What are organs that secrete an oily lubricating fluid?	60 points What is the fatty tissue?	70 points What are tubes that carry blood through the body with oxygen and food?	80 points What are organs that separate waste products from the blood and secrete them as sweat?	90 points What does the fatty tissue layer provide?	100 points What are blood vessels, nerves, oil glands, sweat glands and hair follicles?
10 points What is produced by sunlight on the skin?	20 points How do the oil glands take care of the skin?	30 points How does the skin prevent damage to muscles and bones?	40 points How does the skin control temperature?	50 points What do the nerve endings sense?	60 points How does the skin protect against disease?	70 points What are the nerve endings sensitive to?	80 points What are changes in color, temperature, or moistness?	90 points How do the blood vessels control body temperature?	100 points What are temperature control, protection against injury and disease, provides sensations, creates vitamin D, cares for itself and warns of disease?
10 points What happens to the skin and fatty tissue?	20 points What is one thing that happens to aging skin?	30 points Why does aging skin get dry?	40 points What happens to the circulation as we age?	50 points What happens to the skin as we age?	60 points Why do older people feel cold?	70 points Why do blood vessels break easily?	80 points Why does older skin tear and get sores easily?	90 points What are oxygen and nutrients?	100 points What are a tendency to feel cold, suffer from skin tears, heal slowly, become wrinkled and develop pressure sores?
10 points What are moles?	20 points How should we wash and dry the skin?	30 points What should be done every day?	40 points What dries the skin?	50 points What should we eat to have healthy skin?	60 points Why should older people change position often?	70 points What are clothes and bedding?	80 points What is massage?	90 points What are powder and lotion?	100 points What are redness, tears, blisters, scrapes or irritated areas?
10 points What should be reported to a nurse or supervisor?	20 points How often should a bedbound resident change position?	30 points What are urine and feces?	40 points What are places where the bones press against the skin?	50 points How should bedding be maintained?	60 points What causes decubitus ulcers?	70 points What is friction?	80 points What should you use to elevate body parts and keep pressure off an area?	90 points Who should be carefully observed for skin problems?	100 points How long should a resident stay in a chair if he or she can't stand, walk or shift weight frequently?

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Dermis: The thicker layer underneath the surface. The dermis contains:

- Blood vessels: Tubes that carry blood through the body, with oxygen and food
- Nerves: Fibers that carry sensations to and from the brain
- Oil glands: Organs that secrete an oily lubricating fluid
- Sweat glands: Organs that separate waste products from the blood and secrete them as sweat
- Hair follicles: Organs that create hair

Fatty tissue: Layer of fat under the skin. While not part of the skin, the fatty tissue provides a protective layer of padding (to prevent injury to underlying bones and muscles) and insulation (to keep heat in).

Functions of Skin: What Skin Does

1. Controls body temperature:
 - Releases heat through sweat
 - Constricts and expands surface blood vessels to insulate or cool the body
2. Protects against injury and disease:
 - Covers and pads muscles and bones, preventing damage
 - Forms a barrier against harmful organisms and infection
3. Provides sensations:
 - Nerve endings sense danger
 - Sensitive to pressure, pleasure, pain and temperature
4. Creates vitamin D:
 - Skin is primary source of Vitamin D, which is activated through sunshine
5. Cares for itself:
 - Self-lubricating with oil glands
6. Warns of disease:
 - Changes in color, temperature or moistness may signal illness

The Aging of Skin: What Happens

- The skin and fatty tissue layer get thinner.
- The skin becomes less elastic due to changes in connective tissue.
- Oil glands produce less oil, so skin is dry.
- Blood vessel walls get thinner and more delicate, so they break easily.
- Circulation of the blood slows down, so the skin is not getting as much oxygen and nutrition from the blood, causing the skin to become poorly nourished and fragile.

Because of these changes in the skin, older people:

- Tend to feel cold due to thinning of fatty tissue layer
- Suffer from skin tears due to thinning of epidermis and fatty tissue layer
- Heal slowly due to blood vessel changes and other disease processes common in elderly (diabetes, poor immunity, heart disease)
- Become wrinkled due to loss of elasticity of connective tissue
- Develop pressure sores due to loss of fatty tissue padding and decrease in circulation

Caring for Older Skin: What to Do

Keep skin clean:

- Pat skin, don't rub, when washing or drying
- Use powder sparingly — excess powder can cause irritation

Keep skin lubricated:

- Use lotions liberally avoid heavily perfumed soaps/lotions
- Frequent bathing with soap will dry the skin — use lotion cleansers
- Consider bathing two to three times per week
- Keep skin creases and folds dry
- Keep clothes and bedding dry
- Eat nutritious food and drink lots of water
- Change position often to improve circulation and prevent pressure sores
- Don't disturb moles, skin tags or dark spots on the skin
- Massage the skin, but avoid bony projections and irritated areas: Massage around but not directly on them

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- Use chair or bed cushions
- Observe skin daily for changes and report any of the following changes to the nurse
 - Redness in skin, especially over bony projections or high-risk areas such as coccyx, sacrum, hips, heels, elbows, ears, back skull
 - In darker-skin patients, observe skin for areas that are either darker or dark bluish-purple tint or a lighter skin color compared to surrounding areas
 - Rashes or patient itching/scratching
 - Open skin areas such as skin tears with or without bleeding
 - New bruising or red areas
 - Changes in skin temperature (warm or cool)
 - Complaints of pain or burning
 - Swelling
 - Weeping of skin or increase drainage from wounds

Skin Problems

Decubitus ulcers (bed sores or pressure sores)

Causes:

- Sustained pressure on the skin compresses the blood vessels and prevents nutrition and oxygen from getting to the skin cells. Over time, the skin tissue dies and decubitus ulcers develop.
- The skin is under pressure where the bones press against the skin tissue, especially when the weight of the body or a body part is pushing down on a pressure point. In patients with chronic illness or the elderly, the loss of the fatty tissue layer makes the patient more susceptible to pressure.
- Body fluids such as urine and feces contain damaging chemicals. When they remain on the skin, they cause moist areas that become irritated and develop sores.
- Friction from clothing or bedding can injure the skin and lead to skin breakdown.

What to report to the nurse, doctor, or supervisor

- A red pressure area that does not become normal after 20 minutes without pressure
- A reddened area of the skin that does not turn white when you push on it
- In darker-skin patients, observe skin for areas that are either darker or dark bluish-purple tint or a lighter skin color compared to surrounding areas

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- Skin warm or cold to touch
- Any opening in skin, tears in skin, blisters, craters, rashes

Be especially alert when you are caring for patients that are frail, have limited ability to move, or have poor nutrition.

Patients with little or no feeling in parts of the body, such as stroke victims, must be watched because they don't feel pressure spots and may not change position as often as they should.

Preventing skin problems

Encourage or assist patients to:

- Change position, walk or exercise every hour or two
- Keep their skin clean, dry and moisturized
- Keep their bedding free of wrinkles
- Encourage good nutrition and fluid intake.

For patients that are in chairs/wheelchairs for long periods of time:

- Encourage or assist them to stand, walk or shift their weight every 15 to 30 minutes.
- Teach them how to do chair push ups with their arms.
- Teach them to sit with their knees at the same level as their hips, with their thighs horizontal to the chair. This will distribute their weight along their thighs and away from pressure points.

For patients that use special chair cushions, check to be sure that the pads are thick enough to do the job. Place your hand under the pad while the patient is on top of it — if you can feel the patient's body through the cushion, the pad is too thin.

If a patient cannot do these things, he or she should return to bed after an hour in a chair.

For patients that are in bed most of the time:

- Teach them how to use side rails and the trapeze to change position frequently, at least every one to two hours. Be available to assist them if necessary. Even small shifts in body weight are helpful.
- When you are assisting a patient to change position, move him or her carefully so you do not create friction and shearing between the skin and the bedding or clothes.

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- The head of the bed should be raised as little as possible, no more than 30 degrees, to prevent sliding and pressure on the bony areas. If it must be raised higher for eating, it should be lowered an hour later.
- Massage the skin when possible, but avoid massaging pressure points or irritated areas.
- For patients that use mattress overlay pads, check to be sure that the pads are thick enough to do the job. Place your hand under the pad while the patient is on top of it — if you can feel the patient's body through the cushion, the pad is too thin.
- Use comfortable pillows to protect bony projections and reduce pressure between legs.
- Elevate heels off the mattress using a pillow under calves.

For patients with pressure sores:

- Keep weight and pressure off any reddened areas and wounds.

If patient has wound care dressing on pressure sores, notify the nurse if any of the following:

- Changes in skin color surrounding dressing
- Drainage soaked through dressing or leaking around dressing
- Dressing not intact to skin
- Increase drainage or change in odor of drainage
- Swelling in area
- Increase pain or discomfort verbalized by patient

TEST

Skin Care: Guidelines for Ensuring Skin Integrity

Name _____ Date _____ Score _____

Directions: Read each question carefully, then determine the best answer.

1. **A little blister on an elderly person's skin is normal and nothing to be concerned about.**
True or False
2. **You should report a reddened area on the skin to the nurse or your supervisor if _____.**
 - a. It has a dark black or brown center
 - b. It doesn't turn white under your thumb when you press on it
 - c. You remove all pressure from it and it still doesn't return to a normal skin color after 20 minutes
 - d. All of the above
3. **You should encourage patients to have healthy skin by _____.**
 - a. Bathing frequently with soap and water
 - b. Only bathing occasionally
 - c. Using lots of powder in all the skin folds and creases
 - d. Staying clean, using lotion, eating well, drinking water and exercising
4. **When sitting in a chair for long periods, your patients should _____.**
 - a. Sit with knees higher than hips
 - b. Get up or shift their weight every 15 minutes
 - c. Stay there as long as possible
 - d. Avoid shifting their weight in the chair too much
5. **Older people are at risk for pressure sores because _____.**
 - a. They eat too much
 - b. They bathe too often
 - c. The skin, the fatty tissue layer and the blood vessel walls are thinner and more fragile
 - d. Their bones get sharper as they age

TEST

Skin Care: Guidelines for Ensuring Skin Integrity (cont.)

6. **Changes in a person's skin color could be a sign of illness.**
True or False

7. **People who are in bed most of the time should keep the head of their bed raised as high as possible, because a sitting position is better for circulation than a lying position.**
True or False

8. **To reduce the risk of pressure ulcers, the patient confined to bed should:**
 - a. Use pillows under calves to keep heels off the mattress.
 - b. Keep the head of the bed elevated greater than 30 degrees.
 - c. Use an overlay mattress; you should be able to feel the patient's body through the overlay.
 - d. Wash body daily or more frequently using soap and powders.

9. **The nurse should be notified if the pressure ulcer dressing has become contaminated or is no longer intact to the skin**
True or False

10. **Your patient has complained to you that their skin is itchy and you see scratch marks on the patient's arms and legs. You should notify your nurse or supervisor right away.**
True or False