

Soak & Seal Skin Care: The Use of Wet Wrap Therapy when Symptoms Are Severe

Take Action with Daily “Soak and Seal” Skin Care:

- Soak in the bathtub or shower each day. Use warm water, and stay in for 15-20 minutes, so that your skin absorbs a lot of water. Make sure all the skin stays wet. You can do this by using wet towels and washcloths to drop over the shoulders, head and knees.
- Using a cup to pour water over these areas also can be helpful. Use a gentle skin cleanser, and avoid scrubbing with a washcloth.
- Gently pat excess water away, and immediately apply the recommended medicine or moisturizer to **damp skin**.



Attempt to do this within three minutes. This seals in the water. If you are applying skin medicine, do not apply moisturizer over it.

What to Do When Symptoms Are Severe

If your skin is very dry or itchy or you have rash, you may need to increase your daily “soak and seal” skin care to 2-3 times a day. You may also need to add wet wraps after the bath.

Wet Wrap Therapy

Wet wraps are never used on a day-to-day basis long-term. The wet wraps are soaked in warm water and then applied to the skin after soaking and sealing. Wet wraps help keep the skin moist, increase absorption of topical medicines and have a cooling effect.

Supplies for Wet Wrap Therapy

You will need the following for each bath:

- A pair of cotton blend pants and a cotton blend long-sleeved shirt (turtle neck shirt if neck is involved)
- A pair of sweatpants and a sweatshirt
- Four pairs of tube socks
- A basin of warm water for clothing
- If you will use a head wrap, you will also need:
 - Gauze for the head wrap
 - Covering for the head wrap

How to Do a Wet Wrap after the Soak and Seal Bath

- First, fill a basin with warm tap water.
- Place the wet tube socks in the basin of warm water. Squeeze out the excess water.
- Place them on the hands and feet. They may cover some of the arms and legs also.
- Squeeze the excess water from the pants and put them on. Do the same for the shirt.
- Place the dry tube socks on the hands and feet, over the wet socks.
- Place the dry sweatpants and sweatshirt over the wet clothing.
- Leave the wet wraps on for two hours.
- When you remove the wet wraps, place the moisturizing cream over all areas of the skin.
- Now let's talk about the head wrap. For wrapping the head, use the wet cotton gauze. The first wrap anchors the dressing. Apply the dressings up and down, not around the neck. Twist to turn and cover the bridge of the nose.

More about Wet Wrap Therapy

- Your child may feel chilled once wet wraps are applied. In addition to a layer of dry clothing, warming a blanket in the dryer to use once the wet wraps are in place can make your child warm and comfortable.
- Wet wraps are used with severe rash. They should be used with skin medicine and moisturizers.
- Wet wraps are often used at bedtime immediately after a soaking bath. This can be done one to two times daily. The wet wraps are left on for two hours. Wet wraps can be worn overnight if your child falls asleep in the wraps.
- The wet wraps are used for short periods of time, such as 3-5 days, not routinely.
- Wet wraps can be very helpful when the rash is very severe. Close supervision by a health care provider is important when wet wraps are used.

Cleaning the Wet Wrap Clothing

- Wash all wet wrap clothing after each use. Do not use the clothing without washing it.
- Throw away the gauze for the head wrap after use. This cannot be washed.

Remember, you can lead an active life with atopic dermatitis. Soak and seal can help!

Visit our website for more information about support groups, clinical trials and lifestyle information.

PTE.387 © Copyright 2018

NOTE: This information is provided to you as an educational service of National Jewish Health. It is not meant to be a substitute for consulting with your own physician.

National Jewish Health is the leading respiratory hospital in the nation. Founded 119 years ago as a nonprofit hospital, National Jewish Health today is the only facility in the world dedicated exclusively to groundbreaking medical research and treatment of patients with respiratory, cardiac, immune and related disorders. Patients and families come to National Jewish Health from around the world to receive cutting-edge, comprehensive, coordinated care. To learn more, visit njhealth.org.