

## Skin Breakdown under the Breast

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- The skin under your breasts is delicate. Skin breakdown may happen when the skin under your breasts rubs together and traps moisture.
- If you have this problem, the skin under your breasts may become red and raw. It may also itch, ooze or become sore.
- Skin breakdown is more common in the summer when the weather is hot and humid, although skin breakdown can also occur during winter when wearing layers.

### What can I do to treat skin breakdown under my breasts?

Talk to your provider about treatments for this problem. Some other tips that may help to treat skin itching, oozing or soreness include:

- Wash the skin under your breasts with warm, not hot, water. Use a mild soap that is pH balanced. Be very gentle when washing the area. Pat the skin dry. **Do not** rub the area with a towel.
- Lift up your breasts to let air get to the skin under your breasts. Do this 2 times each day for about 10 minutes each time. If this is not possible, pat the skin dry a few times a day.
- **Do not** use creams or lotions on the skin under your breasts. These products can trap moisture and make the problem worse.
- Make sure you wear a bra with good support. **Do not** wear a bra when you sleep.
- Wear clothing that dries quickly. It is best to wear loose, light clothing.
- If the skin is intact (no open areas), consider using an antiperspirant in the area or anti-chafe balm (or cream) to control moisture and friction in the area.

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**This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

- A special type of fabric with silver added is available and may help wick away moisture, prevent germs from growing and reduce friction and odor. Ask for a prescription for this fabric from your provider in case your insurance will pay for it. To use:
  - ▶ Cut a single layer of the fabric 2-inches longer on each side of the fold under the breast.
  - ▶ Place this portion of fabric with the silver coated side facing your skin. Make sure to leave the 2-inch tail outside the skin fold.
  - ▶ Remove the fabric every day and replace with a clean portion of the fabric.
    - ▶ Each piece of silver-coated fabric can be washed gently in the sink with soap and water and hung up to dry. Once dry, the fabric can be reused.
    - ▶ Throw away any piece of fabric that becomes soiled with blood.
  - ▶ Do not use creams, powder or lotion with the silver-coated fabric because this will prevent the fabric from working.
- After the skin under your breasts has healed, you may discontinue (stop) using the fabric and try to keep it cool and dry. This may help stop the problem from coming back.
- If you try the tips above and your skin breakdown does not get better in 7 days, or the problem is severe, make an appointment to see your provider.