

# CHCA Project ECHO Personal Care Providers

## All Teach, All Learn

Building Skills, Knowledge, and Confidence



## Skin Care Basics for Personal Care Providers

Personal care providers play a key role in protecting skin health by reporting early signs of damage, helping prevent serious problems and supporting healing. This Learning Snapshot provides simple tips and practical knowledge to help Personal Care Providers spot, prevent, and report skin issues before they worsen.

Below are some important tips and notes adapted from Dr. Sibbald, CHCA Project ECHO Personal Care Providers Foundations of Skin and Skin Care, May 7 2025

### How Skin Works

Skin has three layers:

- Epidermis: Top layer that protects the body
- Dermis: Middle layer that supports with blood and collagen
- Fat layer: Bottom layer that cushions and keeps warmth

### Spotting Skin Changes Early

- Take a good look at a person's skin when helping with activities like bathing or dressing.
- Look for color changes like redness, paleness, or purple spots.
- Be aware of hot areas, swelling, tight skin, or anything that feels different.
- Check areas of skin that may be at risk for being wet or dry, like skin folds, a person's groin, or areas over joints such as the elbows or buttocks.
- Watch for scrapes, bruises, cuts, sores, or peeling skin.
- Report anything new or unusual to your supervisor or healthcare team.

### Preventing Damage

- Help clients change positions often to prevent pressure sores and protect pressure areas with soft pads or pillows.
- Be gentle when helping with movement or care to avoid causing skin tears.
- Keep a person's nails trimmed to prevent injuries from scratching.
- Make sure clothes and bedding are clean, dry, and not too tight.
- Remember that proper hydration and healthy eating are important for healthy skin.

### Skin Care Tips

- Use warm (not hot) water when bathing someone. Hot water can dry or injure the skin.
- Choose mild, pH-balanced cleansers. Harsh soaps can damage or dry out the skin.
- Gently pat the skin dry with a soft towel. Aggressive rubbing causes friction that can damage skin.
- Apply moisturizers immediately after bathing to help skin stay hydrated and healthy.
- Use ointments or creams based on skin needs. If skin is dry, use a thick cream or ointment. If skin is itchy, use one with a soothing ingredient like oatmeal or urea.

### Quick Reminders

- Applying sunscreen helps prevent skin damage that can weaken skin and lead to sores and cancer.
- Regularly checking a person's skin is important to help spot changes or new skin problems.
- Report concerns early to avoid bigger issues later



Personal care providers are essential healthcare team members who deliver personal care and support to individuals receiving home care. This Project ECHO stream reinforces national standards and best practices and offers opportunities to learn new skills, gain knowledge from experts, and connect with peers in home care. This stream is designed to make learning easy, practical, and effective