



Healthy Skin
Starts with
You!

Having spina bifida means you might have less feeling in the lower parts of your body, especially your bottom, legs, and feet. This means you're at risk for skin damage since you can't feel cuts, bruises, sores, and other problems with your skin.

Call your clinic immediately if:

- A change in skin color or if the skin is open, blistered, or cracked.
- Your skin turns darker or redder and the color doesn't go back to its normal color in 15 minutes.



THIS PROGRAM MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH
AN UNRESTRICTED EDUCATIONAL GRANT
FROM SMITH & NEPHEW.



[HTTP://SPINABIFIDAASSOCIATION.ORG/RESOURCES/DIDYOULOOK](http://spinaBifidaAssociation.org/resources/didyoulook)

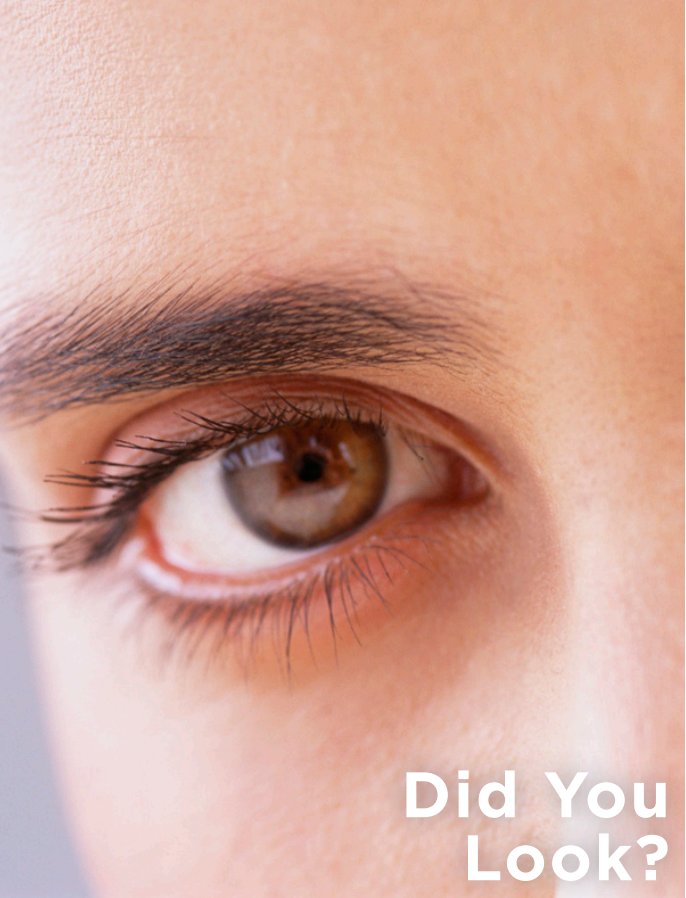
SUPPORTED IN PART BY CDC'S NATIONAL CENTER ON
BIRTH DEFECTS AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Did You Look?

Healthy Skin Starts with You!

Care for
**Adolescents
and Adults**
with Spina
Bifida





**Did You
Look?**

Pressure.

Sores can develop on parts of the body that are constantly pressed or squeezed. Sitting for more than 15 minutes without moving can cause pressure sores. Watch areas where your bones are right under the skin and where there is constant pressure, like your bottom, ankles, toes, under shoes, braces, snaps, zippers, buttons, or other fasteners.

Moisture.

You can develop skin problems any time your skin gets wet and stays wet. If you can't stay dry with your bowel and bladder program, be sure you check the skin around your upper thighs and bottom. Those areas are the most common places for skin problems to develop from moisture.

Heat.

Hot water, space heaters, radiators, or hot surfaces in the summer sun can burn your skin. The same goes for heating pads, electric blankets, and holiday decorations. In the kitchen, watch out for hot pots and pans, hot food, and hot kitchen appliances. Don't rest anything hot on your lap.

Friction.

Skin rubbed against rough surfaces can cause cuts, scrapes, or bruises. During transfers, avoid dragging your bottom across the surface or sliding board (transfer board). Crawling on rough surfaces, swimming barefoot, or bumping your body too hard when you transfer can also damage your skin. Wounds from friction can also happen when your braces repeatedly rub against your skin.

Protecting Your Skin

- Check your skin daily for changes in color or breaks in the skin. Pay close attention to skin under your braces and over bony areas like your hips, bottom, knees, and feet.
- Use a mirror or ask for help to check the areas you can't see.
- Keep your skin clean by showering or taking a bath every day. Check the water temperature before getting into the shower or bathtub.
- Keep your skin dry. Dry your skin completely after taking a shower or bath. Make sure you dry between your toes, between skin folds, behind your knees, your upper thighs, and your bottom.
- Change your underwear, clothes, socks, and sheets every time they get wet. Keep an extra set of clothing in your backpack in case of an accident.
- Use a barrier cream if your bottom and upper thighs are always wet.
- When sitting, relieve pressure by shifting your weight for 15 seconds, every 15 minutes.
- Turn yourself in bed or ask for help if you need it.
- Avoid sliding across rough or uneven surfaces.
- Use braces, shoes, a wheelchair, and a cushion that fit properly and do not rub against your skin.
- Maintain a healthy weight for your age and size.
- Wear sunscreen, a hat, sunglasses, and protective clothing when you're out in the sun.