

Recommendations for protecting the integrity of the skin of preterm infants include using minimal adhesive tape, backing the tape with cotton, and delaying adhesive and pectin barrier removal until adherence is reduced ([Lund and Kuller, 2014](#)). Emollients, such as Eucerin or Aquaphor, have been used to promote skin integrity and prevent dry, cracking, and peeling skin in infants at risk for skin breakdown; however, the use of such agents has been shown to increase the risk for coagulase-negative infections in preterm infants and therefore should not be routinely used ([Lund and Kuller, 2014](#)).

It is unsafe to use scissors to remove dressings or tape from the extremities of very small and immature infants, because it is easy to snip off tiny extremities or nick loosely attached skin. Solvents used to remove tape are avoided, because they tend to dry and burn the delicate skin. Guidelines for skin care are listed in the [Nursing Care Guidelines](#) box.

Nursing Care Guidelines

Neonatal Skin Care

General Skin Care

Assessment

Assess skin every day or more often as needed for redness, dryness, flaking, scaling, rashes, lesions, excoriation, and breakdown.

Identify risk factors for skin injury: Gestational age ≤ 32 weeks, high-frequency ventilation, extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO), hypotension requiring vasopressors.

Use a valid assessment tool to provide reliable and objective measurement of skin condition.

Evaluate and report abnormal skin findings and analyze for possible causes.

Intervene according to interpretation of findings or physician order.