

## 49. SKIN DISEASE IN CHILDREN

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	<b>Skin Diseases in Adults</b>	<b>Chapter 30</b>
49.2	<b>Introduction</b>	
49.2.1	Essentially, the same principles apply as for adults with the proviso that young children cannot be expected to deal with their own treatment in the same way as adults. [Chapter 30]. As with adults, the severity of skin diseases can vary enormously. At one extreme, small patches of reddened or dry skin on the scalp and nappy areas are very common, particularly in babies, and do not produce any significant problems. At the other extreme, the skin condition can be severe and widespread leading to a need for frequent treatment and causing considerable upset both for the child and the parents.	
49.2.2	Itching is a particular problem for children who find it very difficult not to scratch, if indeed they are old enough to understand that they should not. Because of this, a child's hands may have to be bandaged to prevent scratching or pulling off dressings. Obviously this will add significantly to the care needs.	
49.3	<b>Care Needs</b>	
49.3.1	When the skin condition is severe and widespread, there is likely to be a need for more frequent bathing and nappy changing than would normally be the case. In addition preparations and dressings may have to be applied to the skin and the hands may have to be bandaged to prevent the child scratching or pulling off the dressings. This may well add up to a substantial amount of help, in some cases confined to morning and evening but in others spread through the day. Skin diseases do not give rise to any serious danger so there should be no need for additional supervision.	
49.3.2	Although actual treatment of the skin condition during the night hours may not be necessary, itching may disturb sleep and lead to a need for comforting. Nappies may also need to be changed more frequently in order to protect the damaged skin.	
49.4	<b>Mobility Considerations</b>	
49.4.1	In a few cases there may be mobility needs when for instance the skin disease affects the soles of the feet or when bandaging of the lower limbs is extensive.	

Rarely is this likely to last for more than 3 months at a time.

#### **49.5 Duration of Need**

**49.5.1** Skin conditions in children often respond to treatment, or improve as they get older. The likely duration of need will depend on the circumstances of a particular case. By the age of about 12 years a child may well have learned to treat his own skin and there is unlikely to be a need for comforting at night.

#### **49.6 Further Evidence**

**49.6.1** Understandably, where young children are concerned, parents may be overprotective and apply preparations to the skin more frequently than is required or wise. A report from the GP may establish whether this is the case and may also help to determine the likely duration of need.