Description

Caring For Your Skin In The Birth Room

Claire Nutt (she/her) – Midwife

Social @massagemidwife

Published in The Practising Midwife Volume 27 Issue 5 September 2024, Page 17

https://doi.org/10.55975/TEHU5906

Amidst the flurry of providing maternity care, your skincare maybe overlooked. Daily skin-stressors can include dehydration from long hours, environments, mask-irritation, stress, poor eating and frequent hand washing.[1] This article provides tips for you as midwives to take care of your skin at work.

Your hands

Intensive hand-hygiene strips hands of natural oils, leading to dryness and irritation.[2] Detergents and alcohol-based products alter the nature of outermost skin-layer's proteins, causing damage to protecting intercellular-lipids, decreasing corneocyte cohesion and reducing stratum corneum water-binding capacity, resulting in visible dehydration. This progressively deepens the action of cleansing products, prompting lasting damage to surface skin layers.[3]

Whilst frequent hand washing is a cornerstone of infection control, the impact can range from mild to progressively severe conditions, including contact dermatitis or allergic dermatitis. Opt instead for soothing hand soaps or gels that cleanse without harsh chemicals.[4] After washing, pat skin dry instead of rubbing, which aggravates dryness. Apply rich moisturiser regularly, especially after washing or sanitising.



Hydrate

Working in hot ward environments leaves you susceptible to dehydration. This manifests as lacklustre skin and puffy eyes. Sipping water throughout your shift will lift skin-cells. Consider a mist spray, which revitalises quickly and is a great tonic on nights.[3]

Moisturise

When considering a moisturiser, look for products containing naturally emulating ingredients, for example seed oils,

chickweed or beeswax, which lock in moisture and protect skin's barrier function.[5] Keep a travel-sized moisturiser in your pocket for touch-ups throughout shifts.

Nourish

What you put into your body reflects into your skin. Incorporating vitamins C and E, with omega-3 fatty acids into your diet promotes lustre from the inside out. Include foods rich in antioxidants, such as berries and leafy greens, which also protect your skin from environmental damage. Stock up on fruit, oily fish, nuts, oats and avocado to nourish skins natural elasticity.

Protect

As a midwife, you may encounter challenging substances, from cleaning solutions to aggravating materials such as face masks. Protect your skin by wearing appropriate protective equipment when handling potentially hazardous materials. Use a rich moisturiser throughout the day to reduce irritation from masks.

Rest

Taking breaks promotes calm and recharges. Give your skin a break too by applying hydrating facial mist or massage hands with nourishing oil. Not only soothing tired muscles and reducing stress, this will also give your skin a boost of moisture.

Quality sleep is essential for skin repair and regeneration that is particularly impacted by shift work. Consider sleeping regularity that promotes melatonin rhythms. If you find it difficult to sleep, you can introduce calming guided relaxations from Apps like Insight Timer or Calm that support quality rest when used regularly.

Prioritising skincare is essential for midwives countering the challenges of professional demands whilst maintain healthy, radiant skin. By following these simple yet effective tips, you can ensure that your skin remains nourished and resilient inside and out, supporting your exceptional care provision with boosted vitality. **TPM**

References

1. Byrom S. The Power of Touch: A Midwife's Hands. TPM. 2022:25(8):19. doi.org/10.55975/FJBP5607.
2. Haque Mojumdar E, Pham QD, Topgaard D, Sparr E. Skin hydration: interplay between molecular dynamics, structure, and water uptake in the stratum corneum. Sci Rep. 2017;7(1):15712. doi.org/10.1038/s41598-017-15921-5.
3. Slotosch C, Kampf G, Loffl er H. Eff ects of disinfectants and detergents on skin irritation. Contact Dermatitis: 2007;57(4):235-241. doi.org/10.1111/ j.1600-0536.2007.01200.x.
4. WHO Guidelines on Hand Hygiene in Health Care: First Global Patient Safety Challenge Clean Care Is Safer Care. WHO. https://www.ncbi.nlm. nih.gov/books/NBK144008/. Published 2009. Accessed May 12, 2024. 5. Rushton E. Natural Wellness Every Day. Penguin Books, London; 2022.

Category

1. TPM Articles
2. TPM Journal

Tags

1. 2024
2. birth
3. Skin Care

Date Created
1st September 2024