

Laundry Care

The daily skin care treatment for ichthyosis requires using large amounts of emollients on the skin. This is great for the skin, but can be very harsh on clothing, as well as washers and dryers.

Below is collection of tips, provided by FIRST members themselves, including the best strategies and products for laundry care.

Products Listed As Free and Clear

Laundry products free of dyes and perfumes are preferred over most products. The “NO” list includes fabric softeners as well as detergents with heavy fragrance and other chemical additives, as they can make skin, itchy, red and uncomfortable. All Free & Clear® is free of perfumes or dyes, and can be less irritating to the skin.

Laundry Additives, Stain Removers, and Tips

- Shake out clothes prior to placing them in the washer
- Shout spray can be an effective product to remove stains from clothing.
- Presoak clothing in vinegar prior to washing.
- Soak clothes in OxiClean and hot water for one or two hours prior to a wash cycle.
- Add a half-cup of Dawn dish detergent with standard amount of laundry detergent. Add to the washer as the tub is filling, then add the clothes. This creates fewer suds in the load.
- Consider setting water level to full load, and add fewer clothes than the cycle can hold.
- Water temperature desires vary. Cold water is less harsh on fabric fibers. If using hot water, be sure to set thermostat at 120°F. Higher water temperatures over *120°F can cause severe burns, please use caution.*
- White vinegar is an inexpensive way to help remove grease stains, and even odor, from your wash. Add a ¼ cup of white vinegar to the load of laundry.
- When using bleach, run an extra rinse of vinegar or consider using a white vinegar/detergent rinse after washing.
- Add OxiClean to wash cycle with detergent.
- Use a regular wash cycle, not a soak cycle for sheets and towels.
- Fuller Brush Products break down tough, greasy stains. www.fullerproducts.com

Keep it Cool

Some moisturizers are petroleum based and can keep the heat from the dryer insulated in clothing. The heat combined with the moisturizer can create a “flammable” atmosphere. Be sure to give your clothing space and time to cool down after the dryer cycle is complete. Laundry can be hung to cool, folded immediately when it comes out of the dryer, or run the dryer on a cool down cycle.

Washing Machines: Use and Care

- Standard front loader washing machines cannot sustain a large amount of suds, so it is difficult to add any other type of product, other than standard laundry detergent. Grease from Aquaphor also tends to ruin the rubber gasket in front loaders. Larger, industrial machines, like those found at the laundromat, may be an option as they are adaptable to

far more cleaning agents and hold much more water, which is better for removing grease and moisturizer.

- Purchase a second washing machine to use for clothes stained and soiled with skin care product. Inexpensive, pre-owned units can be found online.
- Fill the washer with ½ to 1 cup of cleaner such as Simple Green and Dawn dish detergent and hot water; shut it off for 30-60 minutes to start breaking down residue, restart to complete the full wash cycle.
- Run an empty washer with two tablespoons of baking soda and two cups of clear vinegar.
- Remember to scrub the inside ring.

Fabrics

Clothes can feel damp, uncomfortable and soiled when they are saturated by products such as Aquaphor and Vaseline. So choosing the right fabrics, will not only be comfortable to wear, but may help avoid spending more money on clothing than necessary. Natural fabrics like cotton, hemp, linen and silk last longer than polyester or other manmade fabrics.

- 100% cotton clothing is easier to wash, and much more pleasing to the skin. Polyester, spandex, and most sweater materials can be very uncomfortable.
- Silk is also soft on the skin and you can even machine wash silk, as it is the most durable natural fiber – however machine washing silk will make the color slightly darker.
- Tank top style undershirts protect clothing from Aquaphor and can help make the clothes last longer. Some members wear 100% silk or 100% cotton long underwear under their clothing.
- Fleece sleepers for younger children can work well in the cooler temperatures, and will not absorb lotions.
- Elastic vs. Velcro: Petroleum, found in Aquaphor and Vaseline, and elastic have the same chemical composition, therefore one causes the other to break down. This process can wreak havoc on elastic waist clothing. Clothes with velcro or drawstring waists, rather than elastic will increase wearability.

Recommended brands and retailers for cotton clothing for children and adults:

Carters, Hannah Anderson, The Gap, Old Navy, LL Bean, Lands End, Fresh Produce, Target, Hanes, Fruit of the Loom

This information is provided as a service to patients and parents of patients who have ichthyosis. It is not intended to supplement appropriate medical care, but instead to complement that care with guidance in practical issues facing patients and parents. Neither FIRST, its Board of Directors, Medical & Scientific Advisory Board, Board of Medical Editors, nor Foundation staff and officials endorse any treatments or products reported here. All issues pertaining to the care of patients with ichthyosis should be discussed with a dermatologist experienced in the treatment of their skin disorder.



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Improve lives and seek cures for those affected by ichthyosis and related skin types.

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