

Itch is common in kidney disease. Only one area may itch or you might feel itchy all over. It can also be caused by skin sensitivities and allergies. Scratching can cause breaks in the skin, bleeding, and infection. Tell your care provider if you're having a problem with itching.

## What tips can I try?

### *Home*

- Keep your home cool and humid, especially in the winter.
- Use mild detergents and make sure clothing and bedding are rinsed well.
- Wear loose, lightweight cotton clothing and use cotton bed sheets.

### *Diet*

Kidney disease can cause high levels of phosphorus, which can cause itching. If you wish, you can speak with your care provider and/or dietitian about limiting phosphorus in your diet or about taking medicine to lower your phosphorus.

### *Personal Care*

- Bathe for at least 15 minutes every day in lukewarm water. Baths are preferred to showers.
- Soaps and body washes can irritate your skin. Use gentle cleansers instead (such as CeraVe® or Cetaphil®) and use them only on the parts of your body that really need cleaning (such as sweaty areas like armpits and groin). Otherwise, just use water to wash.
- Gently pat your skin to dry. **Moisturize within 2 minutes of getting out.** Your skin should still be damp. Use hypoallergenic moisturizers with ceramides (such as CeraVe®) that have no scents or other additives. Do not use the cream on areas of broken skin.
- Avoid scratching – keep fingernails short, try massaging your skin rather than scratching, try wearing gloves at night.

## What treatment choices do I have?

Talk to your care provider if you're having trouble managing the itching. There are medicated creams and medicine that can help. Some over-the-counter creams or lotions, such as Gold Bond® anti-itch products might help.

Don't take over-the-counter medicine (for example, antihistamines) for your itch.

Ask your care provider about treatment options such as phototherapy or acupuncture.