



Soak & Smear

Soaking and Smearing:

This is an aggressive treatment that is both messy & time intensive. This regime may use a medication you have used before without success, but now is being used in a different way, as part of an intensive treatment regimen that *must be followed exactly*, in order to work. This treatment can lead to marked improvement in even a couple of days. The number of nights for soaking & smearing depends upon the severity of the disease & how long it takes to get it under control. Usually, patients do the soaking & smearing at night, from 4 nights to 2 weeks. The soaking & smearing treatments are done at night because the ointment on your skin will get on your pajamas, instead of your daytime clothes, & the ointment will be on your skin for the hours that you sleep. *You may wish to use an old pair of pajamas, older sheets & blankets and even make use of a mattress pad during this treatment, in order to protect your bed from excessive oil. Sleeping on a separate air mattress is an alternative.* After your skin is under control, the soaking is stopped, but the nighttime smears with an ointment or moisturizer should continue.

Directions:

At night, **soak** in a **bath** (not shower) of plain water for **20 minutes**, using a timer. Upon getting out of the tub, immediately smear your wet skin with the ointment containing the steroid, Triamcinolone. At night, for dry & cracking hands, soak your hands continuously, for 20 minutes, in a pan of warm (not hot) water, then follow the directions for smearing. You may put on cotton gloves or socks, to keep the ointment from rubbing off. After your skin is under control, the night time soaks may be stopped, but continue to apply the ointment. Throughout the treatment period, in the morning, you may apply the steroid cream to the worst areas. Soaking allows water to go into the skin & hydrate it. Smearing on the ointment will (1) trap the water in the skin, because water cannot move through oil, & (2) allow the anti-inflammatory ingredient in the ointment to go deep into the skin.

Maintenance Treatment to Prevent Drying & Irritation:

Repeated wetting (IE: baths, showers, hand washing & swimming) without moisturizing, will *dry out the skin!* So when showering, or washing your hands, it is necessary to apply moisturizer to your slightly moist skin. Less thick moisturizers may be used during the day. At night, for more intense moisturizing, use petroleum jelly based products, such as Aquaphor, or Vaseline or thick cream such as Cerave or Cetaphil. Soap dries out the skin, because it removes the natural body oils.

CLEANSERS & washes remove dirt & body smells without stripping the skin of important surface oils. Don't lather all over or rub with a wash cloth. Limit your cleanser to the arm pits, groin & feet. Too much cleanser will make skin dryness worse & rubbing with a cloth can irritate the skin. Rinse thoroughly, to remove all of the cleanser. This should be the way you shower from now on, to prevent future breakouts.