

# Patient Information for X-linked ichthyosis

## Overview

X-linked ichthyosis is a relatively common genetic disorder affecting the skin in males. It is often seen at birth or shortly after. The affected skin can look "dirty," with brown scale that does not scrape or wash off. This is caused by a steroid deficiency and is not contagious.

## Who's At Risk

X-linked diseases are inherited. Only boys will show signs of the disease, so boys with a family history of ichthyosis are most at risk.

## Signs & Symptoms

X-linked ichthyosis appears as brown scales on the skin, most often on the arms and legs, especially the armpits, elbows, and knees. The skin may appear dirty. Scales on the trunk and limbs may get worse with age, while head and neck scales may improve. It is rarely found on the palms of hands and soles of feet.

## Self-Care Guidelines

The following measures are recommended to reduce scaling:

- Moisturize several times a day and after bathing
- Use non-soap cleansers instead of soap
- Exfoliate with a textured sponge or loofah
- Use a humidifier, especially during winter months

## When to Seek Medical Care

Boys with a "dirty" looking face, neck, or scalp should be seen by a doctor.

Anywhere from 5% to 30% of patients with X-linked ichthyosis also have cryptorchidism, a term used when testicles don't fall into the scrotum before birth. If your baby with X-linked ichthyosis also has undescended testicles, please tell your pediatrician.

## Treatments Your Physician May Prescribe

Ichthyosis is a lifelong condition. Treatment will help, but it will not get rid of the scales entirely. Your doctor might prescribe a topical agent that contains one of the following:

- Alpha hydroxy acid
- Salicylic acid

- Urea