



## Dry skin

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**Dry Skin** affects many people. It is a very common cause of itchy skin, and may cause a skin rash. It occurs year-round, but is especially troublesome during the winter when indoor heating lowers humidity. Any portion of the body may be involved, but the lower legs are usually most prominently affected. People of all ages are affected and the condition tends to worsen as the skin ages. Treatment of dry skin is intended to preserve normal skin oils and to add extra lubrication to the skin. Washing the skin removes natural oils and makes dry skin much worse.

Soap should be used minimally, only when and where needed (for example under the arms, the groin, and feet). Milder, less drying soaps include Dove, Oil of Olay Sensitive Skin Soap, Cetaphil Soap, Neutrogena Dry Skin Formula (unscented), Aveeno Cleansing Bar for Dry Skin, Purpose, and Basis. Cetaphil is a liquid cleanser that is a gentle and effective soap substitute for some. It is especially helpful for cleaning the face and hands.

**Avoid long, hot showers and baths as these will also increase the loss of natural oil.**

After bathing or showering quickly pat dry and immediately (within three minutes of getting out of the water) apply a moisturizer to seal the water in the skin before it evaporates. There are many types of moisturizers available, and the choice of which one to use is a matter of personal preference. Generally speaking, the greasier the moisturizer the more it holds water in and lubricates the skin. Cetaphil Cream, Vaseline Cream, Plastibase, Eucerin Cream, and Aquaphor are examples of this type of moisturizer. Oils are less greasy but still effective. Examples of oils include baby oil, mineral oil, vegetable oils, and bath oil applied directly to the skin. Bath oils used in the bath water makes the tub too slippery. To avoid accidents it is preferable to apply bath oils like other moisturizers, directly to the skin while water beads are still present on its surface. Lotions are cosmetically more elegant and nicer to use, but less effective than ointments or creams as moisturizers. Commonly used lotions include Neutraderm, Lubriderm, Keri, Curel, Complex15, Penkera and Dermatology Moisturizing Lotion. There are many other.

**Dry skin is a condition that cannot be cured. However, with proper attention the tendency can be controlled.**

Skin moisturizers and lubricants are a major part of treatment of many skin diseases. Periods of dryness are to be expected during the disease and often will continue to be a problem as healing takes place. As the rash improves, skin is often slow to regain

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its own moisturizing ability. The skin is especially in need of help during winter months and if one is of middle age or older.

Dryness, chapping and cracking will themselves cause further itching. This can lead to scratching and rubbing which delays healing. Vigorous rubbing often allows germs or harmful chemicals to enter the skin surface, producing new problems. Moisturizers and lubricants will reduce the desire to scratch and, also, act as a partial protective barrier or shield to prevent contact with these substances. To be effective, it is necessary to use a lubricant three or more times daily, just as chapped hands in the winter will need many treatments.

The ingredients of a skin lubricant can be either natural or man-made, but most often the two are combined. Read the label carefully to avoid applying a chemical which you know is irritating.

There are many things to consider when buying a moisturizer. The products vary from thin lotions to thick ointments and even thicker pastes. They need not be expensive to be helpful. Fragrance-free products are often found to be less irritating. Look for skin softeners free of oil gland plugging chemicals (non-comedogenic) when the face is involved and needs treatment.

**Remember – a moisturizer has an extremely important role to play in the healing of skin disease and can sometimes be as helpful as the prescription given to you.**