



Dry Skin

The skin naturally becomes drier with age. The body produces less oil and moisture. The skin also becomes thinner and less elastic.

Signs & Symptoms

- Itchy skin. The skin can be red from scratching it.
- Chapped skin
- Skin that cracks, peels, and/or flakes

Causes, Risk Factors & Care

- Aging
- Cold winter weather
- Dry air or heat
- Harsh skin products
- Washing the skin often
- Some medications
- Allergies
- An underactive thyroid gland; diabetes; and/or kidney disease
- Other skin conditions, such as psoriasis

Dry skin is not a serious health risk. With self-care, it can be easily managed. When it is a symptom of a health condition, treating the condition treats the dry skin.



Self-Care/Prevention:

- Drink 8 or more glasses of water a day.
- Moisturize your skin daily. Use an oil-based lotion.
- Don't overexpose your skin to water, such as with washing dishes. Wear rubber gloves when you wash dishes.
- Take a shower instead of a bath. Use warm (not hot) water. Apply a moisturizing cream while your skin is damp. Use products with lanolin.
- If you prefer to bathe, bathe for only 15 to 20 minutes in lukewarm water. Pat yourself dry. Do not rub. Use a bath oil on your skin after bathing.
- Try sponge baths.
- Use a washcloth instead of soaping the skin directly.
- Use a mild liquid soap, like Cetaphil Lotion, or a fatted soap. Avoid deodorant, medicated, or alkaline soaps.
- Don't use moisturizers with fragrances, preservatives, or alcohol.
- Use a night cream for the face.
- Stay out of the strong sun.
- Do not use tanning salons.



Dry Skin, Continued

- Use a sunblock with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.
- If you get symptoms of dry skin:
 - Don't scratch or rub the skin.
 - Apply oil-based moisturizers often.
 - Lessen exposure of the affected area to water.



Contact Doctor When:

- You have any of these problems with dry skin:
 - Deep cracks on the hands or feet
 - Tight, shiny, or hardened skin
- Itchy skin areas that are raised, have red borders, and are covered with large white or silver-white scales
- You have signs of an infection (fever; increased redness, swelling, pain, or tenderness; pus; blisters; red streaks from the affected area).
- You have diabetes and the dry skin is troublesome.
- You have symptoms of low thyroid (see at www.HealthyLearn.com).
- You have dry skin without a rash and you itch all over.
- Severe itching keeps you from sleeping.
- Self-care brings no relief.