

Dry skin: Tips for managing

Here are tips that can prevent dry skin or keep it from getting worse.

- **Do not use hot water.** Hot water removes your natural skin oils more quickly. Warm water is best for bathing.
- **Use a gentle cleanser.** Soaps can strip oils from the skin. Stop using deodorant bars, antibacterial soaps, perfumed soaps, and skin care products containing alcohol, like hand sanitizers. Look for either a mild, fragrance-free soap or a soap substitute that moisturizes.
- **Limit time in the bathtub or shower.** A 5- to 10-minute bath or shower adds moisture to the skin. Spending more time in the water often leaves your skin less hydrated than before you started. Do not bathe more often than once a day.
- **Moisturize right after baths and showers.** To lock in moisture from a bath or shower, apply a moisturizer while the skin is still damp.
- **Before you shave, soften skin.** It is best to shave right after bathing, when hairs are soft. To lessen the irritating effects of shaving your face or legs, use a shaving cream or gel. Leave the product on your skin about 3 minutes before starting to shave. Shave in the direction that the hair grows.
- **Change razor blades after 5 to 7 shaves.** A dull blade bothers dry skin.
- **Use a humidifier.** Keep the air in your home moist with a humidifier.
- **Apply cool cloths to itchy dry skin.**
- **Soothe chapped lips.** At bedtime, apply a lip balm that contains petrolatum. Other names for this ingredient are petroleum jelly and mineral oil.
- **Cover up outdoors in winter.** In the cold, wear a scarf and gloves to help prevent chapped lips and hands.
- **Be good to your face.** If you have very dry skin, cleanse your face just once a day, at night. In the morning, rinse your face with cool water.