

- **The Weather And Our Skin**

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The skin is an important organ because of its different functions. Acting as the protective layer of the body, it regulates body temperature and prevents germs from entering and damaging internal organs. As the body part responsible for the sense of touch, the skin works with the nervous system to alert the body of potential dangers by detecting pressure, pain, heat, and cold. Maintaining healthy skin should definitely be a part of everyone's hygiene, but an area's climate can affect the health of it. Extremes in weather, both hot and cold, can worsen existing skin conditions or sometimes even cause new ones.

Colder climates can be tough on skin. The winter time means low humidity and cold winds, stripping necessary moisture on the skin. Throughout the winter months, many people find their skin to be rough, red, tightened, cracked, or peeling because of the dryness. Especially because of current weather conditions, skin should be taken well care of. Easy ways to treat dry skin at home is to avoid taking long, hot showers and apply a moisturizer daily.

For many, nothing is more relaxing than a long, hot shower. During the colder months, many people enjoy the hot water to warm up and shake off the chill. Although it may be relaxing, showers that are too long with water too hot can damage skin by drying it out. Hot showers can inflame the skin and interrupt the skin's natural balance of moisture. The hot water washes off natural oils, fats, and proteins that keep skin healthy. Dry skin can increase your chances of infection and actually lead to an over-production of oils in an effort to compensate for the lack of moisture.

Lotion is beneficial in all seasons and is one of the most inexpensive ways to nourish dry skin. Keeping skin hydrated is especially important in the winter and if one has sensitive skin. Applying body lotion on regular intervals will protect skin from being chapped or dried. Even those with normal to oily skin can suffer roughness in joints such as knees and elbows, but can be prevented if moisturizer is applied. Lotion also soothes calluses, which can sometimes be painful. Applying body lotion can soften the calluses and make it easier to remove the dead skin. Even though skin may be in a good shape and does not require moisturizer, a gentle massage with body lotion will surely relax nerves and reduce stress from tired limbs.

During the cold winter months, one can easily enjoy a hot shower or forget to moisturize. However, it is especially during this time when it is most important to remember the easy ways to take care of our skin.