

eHouseCall

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A Monthly Electronic Newsletter from HealthLink

Doctor's Bag



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Use Sunscreen Protection All Year Round

There's no escaping the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays – not even in the wintertime. Winter sunlight can be just as damaging as summer sun – and even more so when it's reflected off a nice, white layer of snow.

Add dry, cold air or frigid winter winds and you've got all the reasons you need to keep your skin well protected.

As a routine, use sunscreen or moisturizer with an SPF of at least 15. If you are shoveling, sledding, skiing, taking a walk, or planning to be outside for any extended period of time, most dermatologists recommend protecting your exposed skin with an SPF of 30.

Don't forget your lips. Prevent dry, chapped and cracking lips by applying lip balm or a petroleum-based ointment. Use frequently during the day to form a protective barrier and seal in moisture, and at night to heal while you sleep.

As always, check with your physician if you notice sores that do not heal, growing bumps or nodules, and any visual changes in existing moles.

HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

FEBRUARY

Winterize your Skin!

The following tips are from the article, "Moisture Maximizers" by Megan Othersen Gorman for Prevention.com.

Here are five good ways to protect your dry skin in cold weather:

1. Lather, rinse – and do not repeat. Hot water removes natural oils from your skin that help keep it hydrated. So those long, hot baths rob your skin of moisture, making it dry and itchy. The cure? Shower in lukewarm water for no more than 10 minutes.
2. Slather while damp. Moisturizers work by trapping water in your skin's outer layers, so use creams and lotions immediately after exiting the shower. Give yourself a quick towel-dry so you're not dripping wet and then coat yourself with moisturizer. Need industrial-strength help? Go for ointments or creams rather than lotions, which include more water than oil. (You might even dab on some baby oil or petroleum jelly.)
3. Spring for a humidifier. In the summertime, your skin can replenish itself by soaking up the moisture in the air. But when the mercury falls, so does the natural humidity. Add the drying effects of indoor heating, and you have trouble. Solution: When you jack up the thermostat, turn on a humidifier, as well.
4. Drink water. Hydrate your skin from the inside by downing at least eight 8-ounce glasses a day.
5. Switch soaps. If, despite your best efforts, you're still plagued by the winter pricklies, switch to a milder soap (look for "moisturizing" on the label). Your choice should also be fragrance-free – it'll be less irritating.



DidUKnow?

- ♦ The skin is the body's largest organ, covering the entire outside of the body and weighing about 16% of total body weight.
- ♦ Every 24 hours, the surface of the skin sheds a layer of dead cells.
- ♦ Skin grows faster than any other organ. We keep renewing our skin our entire lives.
- ♦ There are approximately 19,000,000 skin cells on every square inch of the human body.
- ♦ Skin's biggest job is protection. It is a tough, elastic, flexible, and waterproof covering that helps protect other organs and body parts from such things as germs, heat, cold, and sunlight.
- ♦ With age, skin becomes thinner, often drier and loses elasticity, especially if it has been exposed to excessive sunlight, and becomes more fragile.
- ♦ Because exposure to the sun influences how well skin ages, protecting the skin from the sun is the single most important practice in skin care.

Information Sources

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