

University Dermatology and Skin Cancer Center

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Tips to help treat and prevent Dry Skin

1. **Prevent baths and showers from making dry skin worse.** When your skin is dry, be sure to:
 - Close the bathroom door
 - Limit your time in the shower or bath to 5 or 10 minutes
 - Use warm rather than hot water
 - Wash with a gentle, fragrance-free cleanser
 - Blot your skin gently dry with a towel
 - Slather on the moisturizer immediately after drying your skin
2. **Apply moisturizer immediately after washing.** Ointments, creams and lotions (moisturizers) work by trapping existing moisture in your skin.
 - You need to apply a moisturizer within a few minutes of drying off after bathing/showering or washing hands.
 - Reapply moisturizers throughout the day for very dry skin as needed.
3. **Use an ointment or cream rather than a lotion.** Ointments and creams are more effective and less irritating than lotions. Look for one that contains petroleum, dimethicone, or an oil (mineral oil, olive oil, jojoba oil, etc). Other ingredients that help to soothe dry skin include colloidal oatmeal, lactic acid, urea, shea butter, hyaluronic acid, ceramides, glycerins and lanolin.

Recommended Moisturizers:

- Aveeno Eczema Therapy with colloidal oatmeal
 - Theraplex Emollient and Theraplex oil moisturizer for after shower and bath
 - Neutrogena Hydroboost
 - CeraVe Moisturizing Cream
 - Cetaphil Moisturizing Cream
 - Aquaphor, Vanicream, Eucerin Cream
4. **Use only gentle, unscented skin care products.** Look for soaps that have neutral to low pH, hypoallergenic, and are fragrance free. Some skin care products are too harsh for dry, sensitive skin. Avoid high pH deodorant-type soaps (like Dial, Irish Spring, Ivory) and skin care products that contain alcohol, fragrances, retinoids, or alpha-dihydroxy acid (AHA). Avoiding these products will help your skin retain its natural oils.

Recommended Soaps: Dove, Purpose, Cetaphil, Aveeno, Vanicream products

5. **Choose non-irritating clothes and laundry detergent.** When our skin is dry and raw even clothes and laundry detergent can be irritating. Wear cotton or silk under your clothing made of wool or another material that feels rough. Use laundry detergent labeled "hypoallergenic" and avoid dryer sheets.