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Tips and Solutions for DRY SKIN: Learn What It Is, What Cause It and What To Do About It!

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Tips and Solutions for DRY SKIN: Learn What It Is, What Cause It and What To Do About It!

What Is Dry Skin?

If you are suffering from dry skin, you know the itch, the scratching and then the pain of having raw skin is uncomfortable. You know that it is something that has happened for a reason, but for most, that reason is not understood. Why do you have dry skin? What is happening to the skin anyway? When you can understand what dry skin actually is, you can actually learn how to prevent it and how to get through a dry skin spell, too.

What Is It?

Dry skin is just what it sounds like. For some reason, the moisture that is in your skin is no longer there. For most people, the body produces a number of different natural oils that keep the skin moist and soft. It does this only so that your skin is soft but so that it is less likely to be injured or to dry out. But, for some reason, your skin has reduced the amount of oils that it is producing. Or, you are washing away those oils so often that your skin is left feeling dry, itchy and even painful.

There are several ways that this can happen, of course. Most commonly, it is how you are taking care of your skin. Exposure to the weather elements can cause damage to the skin, first of all. For example, during the winter many get dry skin because of the wind, cold air and the lowered temperatures have caused your body to lose those natural oils.

If the air in your home is dry, this too can cause your skin to become dry. Air pulls moisture from any place it can and if your skin is moister than the air around it, the moisture is naturally pulled out. Another common reason for dry skin is bathing in water that is very hot and doing so often. This too can cause your skin to lose those natural oils that are helping to keep the skin moist.

All of these conditions can be prevented. For some, medical conditions are to blame for their dry skin. When that is the case, it is even more important to seek out the help of your doctor. Often, there is help for your condition whether it be just applying lotions or taking better care of your skin in the first place.

Dry Skin: Medically Speaking

You've probably had dry skin before. In fact, most people do face some dry skin at some point in their lives. Is it something to worry about? Should you seek out a doctor's help? Those questions must be answered on an individual basis, but what you should know is what the medical science behind dry skin actually is. There are several qualifications to consider, here.

Dry skin is medically called Xeroderma. The term Xeroderma actually means dry skin. This condition is one that involved the integumentary system of your body. That is, it effects your skin, or your largest organ. In most cases, this condition happens because your body has lost important natural oils and moisture from its cell walls, which causes your skin to become dry feeling. Since the skin is composed of several layers, the reaction to this may be different depending on the extent of the condition.

For most patients, the only necessary treatment for dry skin is to take better care of it and to use moisturizers and emollients on the skin. These things will replenish the lost moisture and oils in the skin, allowing your body to feel better because it has what it needs to remain healthy. For more serious conditions in which the skin is damaged through being too dry, there are prescription ointments and moisturizers that can be administered for maximum benefit.

Xeroderma happens throughout the body but there are some areas that see it much more often than others. For example, you may find that your lower legs, your arms, your thighs and your body's side, near the abdomen are the most common areas. Others include the hands, the face and the neck area.

If you are suffering from Xeroderma or dry skin your symptoms can range in severity. Usually, you will experience scaling which is actually the loss of the first layer of outer skin on your body. This is often a visible sign. Others including itching and even in extreme cases, cracks will appear in the skin. This is often the case for those that have dry skin on their feet.

Dry skin is a common problem that most people will face at some point in their lives. Large or small, it will be one that you should take care of as those that continue to experience it are likely to scratch the skin which can in fact tear it open causing more damage.

Do I Have Dry Skin?

Dry skin is a condition in which the skin has lost an all important ingredient in its health. That is its moisture. The skin naturally produces a number of different natural oils that are used to keep the skin hydrated and looking beautiful. There are other reasons for this, of course, like keeping the skin healthy and avoiding injury. Yet, most people will experience times when their skin is less than perfect. For some, dry skin will be the problem.

How Do You Know If You Have Dry Skin?

If you have had dry skin in the past, you probably know what to expect. If you haven't or you are not sure that what you are experiencing is dry skin, here are a few symptoms to look for.

- Dry skin has a feeling to it that is quite unique. Your skin will feel taut, as if it is being pulled tight. This is usually evident after you have showered or been swimming.
- Your skin can also look like it is dry. Here, it may look less plump and soft. It is likely to look shrunken and dehydrated.

- Most people that have dry skin will tell you that the biggest problem with it is having itchy skin. Sometimes, it can be so bad that the itch is worse than dealing with the dry skin.
- You may see some fine lines or even cracks in the skin, as evidence of just how dry this is. This is common in the feet and in the hands.
- You may see the skin scaling off. Flaking of the skin is a common sign. Here, your skin's outer layer is peeling or flaking off. Although it is not painful, it can worsen into a condition that is very much so painful.
- Your skin in the area may also be red. A chapped looking red is a sign of severe dry skin.
- If you have scratched at your dry skin, chances are good that you will also have a number of sores in the area. This can be common but is also a very bad thing as these open sores can easily lead to infections.

Understanding what dry skin looks and feels like can help you to avoid having to experience it. Take the time necessary to get the help you need for this condition either with the help of your doctor for severe cases or with the help of your over the counter moisturizers.

What's Causing Your Dry Skin?

Dry skin happens to be very uncomfortable. It also happens to be something that you can avoid by just paying attention to how you are caring for your skin. The causes of dry skin range widely but there are some considerations for this condition that happen more often than not. You may have just bathed in water that was too hot too often or you may have a medical condition that is causing your skin to become too dry. In any case, understanding what is causing your dry skin will help you to prevent it from happening over and over again.

Common Dry Skin Causes

The causes for dry skin range in severity too. While you may be just a bit uncomfortable with the itchy skin, for others it is painful. Here are some of the causes that you may have been exposed to.

- Low humidity. When you are exposed to warm air indoors and then venture out into the cold outdoor air, your skin reacts to this humidity level. Because it is used to the warmer temperatures, when you are outdoors it easily can dry out causing your skin to flake and even hurt at times.
- Too Much Washing. If you wash your skin too often or you are using a very hot temperature of water, your skin loses its important natural oils which results again in dry skin.
- Soap. Some soaps are too harsh for the skin. They will draw out and wash away those natural oils which will leave your skin dry and cracking. Using only mild soaps can be helpful in avoiding dry skin.
- Vitamin A. If you don't get enough Vitamin A in your diet, you too may experience dry skin. Adding more will reduce the occurrence and severity of your dry skin.
- An illness. There are several illnesses that can bring on dry skin. Usually this is due to the medications that you may be taking for the illness that you have.

- Sunlight. Sunlight actually can draw out the moisture in your skin, too, leaving it dry. To avoid this problem, seek out a moisturizer that provides sun blocking benefits to you, too.

The cause of your dry skin may be something different, too. The fact is that there are many causes to this common condition. The good news is that most of the time all that is needed is prevention from these conditions or a few moisturizers to give you the relief you deserve.

Preventing Dry Skin

How can you actually prevent this year's dry skin attack? If you are like many other people, the fall and winter months are the worst for dealing with dry, itchy skin. Unfortunately, it is something that you must consider dealing with ahead of time if you will be able to actual prevent those rough spots. Although complete normal and often very common, dry skin is still something that is bothersome and can even be painful. There are several good ways that you can find prevention, though.

Methods To Prevention

Consider these methods to preventing your dry skin from happening in the first place. Or, use them to treat the dry skin you've been experiencing.

1. When the weather is bad, make sure that you wear protective clothing to keep the snap of the cold wind out. If you don't do this, exposed skin is the first place that you will find dry skin located. That includes your face and your hands, to common areas for dry skin to appear.
2. Avoid taking showers. If you have dry skin continuously, this is a great way to stop it. Showers, especially those that are of hot water, are detrimental to skin care. You are sure to find yourself relaxing better in a bath anyway. Showers actually strip the natural oils from your skin that can prevent dry skin.
3. Use milder soaps on your skin. Look for bar soap and hand soap that is mild. There are several brands that are available to you that don't contain such harsh chemicals and abrasives that can rip away the natural oils in your skin.
4. Use lotions and moisturizers. If you know that your skin is going to be dry, use moisturizers to fight it before it happens. You can also tackle your problems more effectively if you treat dry skin sooner rather than later when it is painful.
5. Use bath oils. Another way to get a treatment for your dry skin is to add bath oils to your bath water. These add in the oils that may be depleted because of the weather or other condition that is causing your dry skin.

Use these methods to fight off your dry skin. You don't have to worry about how bad it will be this year when you have a few tricks to fighting and preventing dry skin available to you now.

Treating Dry Skin

There are several effective ways that you can treat your dry skin. Of course, prevention is the best medicine as it provides you with the highest quality relief and the fastest possible relief from the itching and burn of dry skin. For each person, it will take a few minutes to time to determine what is causing your dry skin and then to find the appropriate way to avoid that problem from happening. But, when you can't or you already have dry skin, use these treatment options to help you to find the relief that you need.

The Very Dry

If you have very dry hands or very dry feet, you can get relief by using petroleum jelly on them. Just before you go to bed at night, use just a slight amount of petroleum jelly on your hands, getting into all areas. Then, slip on a very light pair of cotton gloves or socks while you sleep. This will give the skin enough time to absorb the jelly without making a mess. You can do this as often as you would like to. You can also use this same method to treat nails that are overly dry or brittle.

The Scratch

One of the worst things that you can do for dry skin is to scratch it. Of course, it itches pretty badly as it is. To avoid doing this, try to use treatments that not only help to relieve the dry skin but also to help stop the itching. You can do this with moisturizers. They are often one of the best methods for relieving all symptoms of dry skin quickly. Apply them several times per day if necessary.

You can also try to take a bath that mixes warm water with one cup of oatmeal in it. To do this, place about a cup of oatmeal in a cotton cloth and cook it as you normally would. Add this to the bathtub and use it as a sponge to help relieve the dry skin and the itch. There are also a number of products on the market that can provide this same help to you.

There are medications on the market that can help with stopping both the itch and the dry skin. These are available as over the counter products. Look for over the counter 1% hydrocortisone cream on the effected areas. If they are very bad, contact your doctor who will likely give you another prescription strength product to take.

You can treat the dry skin that is driving you mad. Take some time to find the best possible solution for your skin.

Dry Skin Or Health Concern?

While most cases of dry skin are something that is complete normal for your to experience, other time, dry skin can be a sign of something much more significant. Those that have been experiencing dry skin for a long time or are unsure of what is causing it should contact their

doctor to see if they may have other conditions that could be leading to this complication. In most cases, this won't be, yet for some it will be enough to bring them in to the doctor.

There are several different medical conditions that can lead to problems like dry skin. Ichthyosis vulgaris is one of them. This condition is also known as fish scale disease as the skin has problems shedding its dead skin cells. Instead, they accumulate on the skin and cause what looks like thick scales on the skin. This happens often on the lower legs and can range in color.

Another medical condition is that of lamellar ichthyosis. This condition is one that lasts throughout your life. Infants are born with the condition which will produce scales of different sorts throughout the body. This condition is one that leads to disfiguring results and often to psychological damage as well. Another condition is that of asteatotic eczema; which is a condition that leaves the skin with dry, scaly, fissured. The skin is itching and may become inflamed which leads to bleeding. This condition can happen to anyone but is most common in the elderly.

Yet another condition in which dry skin plays a role is that of Psoriasis. This condition is one that results in the skin having dry scales that are usually a silvery color. Sometimes, they can look like dandruff. Those that have this condition are likely to have skin that is cracked and will bleed. Pus filled blisters are also common. Unfortunately, this is a disease that is chronic and often has flares that happen sporadically. Most patients are diagnosed with this disease in their early 20's but it can happen at any time in your life.

Any of these skin conditions can look like dry skin. While most of them are rare, it is important that you seek out the help of your doctor if you feel that you may be suffering for any of them. It is vitally important to seek out the help that you need as inflamed skin is not only painful but it can also lead to infections and further complications.

Should I Call My Doctor About Dry Skin?

When is dry skin more than just something to put lotion on? Understanding when it is important to call on a doctor is essential to getting the help that you need. Often, more costs of dry skin really only need minor attention in the way of lotions and preventative treatments. There are times, though, when you should seek out the help of a doctor. It is possible that dry skin can be a symptom of something else that is more troublesome. It can also be a situation where your body is having a bad reaction to a medication or treatment that you are receiving.

When To Call

Here are several cases in which you really should pick up the phone and call on your doctor for some help.

1. If your body itches and feels like there is something bothering your skin much like that of dry skin, call on your doctor. You may or may not have a rash that you can notice.

2. If you have dry skin that is itching you severely that it is interfering with your day to day function or sleep, call on your doctor.
3. If your home treatment of your dry skin has not been helping or providing any relief after several applications, call on your doctor.

Scratching: The Bad Side

If you have dry skin so badly that you've been scratching it heavily, you should take the time to call on a doctor to find relief. If you have scratched the skin so much so that you've broken it open and it is a painful sore, you should seek help.

If you don't seek out any help, you may find yourself dealing with not only dry skin but a possible skin infection as well. This infection could show itself in a number of ways. You may have a lot of pain, swelling in the area, warmth in the area, and red colored skin. You may see a discharge of white or clear pus. If you have a fever that is over 100 degrees F, or more, it is time to call a doctor. You may also experience red streaking that runs from the area that was dry skin outwards. Finally, check your lymph nodes near the area. If they are swollen then you have a possible infection.

If you have any of these symptoms from your dry skin, seek out the help of your doctor as soon as possible. Relief is around the corner.

Are You Likely To Suffer From Dry Skin?

There are several times when you may be more likely to suffer from dry skin than others. For some, a bout of dry skin now and then is nothing to worry about. Yet, if you are someone that has had dry skin often, you may be more likely to experience complications for dry skin or even just have to deal with it throughout your life. Are you at risk for suffering from dry skin?

You May Be At Risk

There are several age groups that suffer from dry skin more often than others. In fact, the older you are the less young and healthy your skin will be. That's because the oil producing glands in your skin are not as active as they used to be. In addition to this, the skin does not move fluids and healthy cells as fast. Still, the fact that your skin may not be shedding old cells as fast as it used too can also add to your risk factors. Your epidermis ends up getting thinner which leaves more fragile layers of your skin exposed and therefore at risk. This along with the care that you provide to your skin may cause dry skin to happen more often as you age.

Age isn't the only thing that brings on dry skin more commonly.. In addition, you may be suffering from exposure to the sun, too. Those that don't wear protective sunscreen are often at risk for UV penetration which does a lot of damage to your skin. In addition to being a potential causer of cancer, this can also leave your skin looking and feeling older and dry.

Did you know that a man's skin stays healthier in the way of dry skin than a woman's does? This is due to the amount of oil produced as a man will continue to produce good levels of oil into their 80s. Your health plays a role too. If you have diabetes, for example, you are likely to have damaged blood vessels and nerves, which leave you more susceptible to infection and other skin risks. Smoking is yet another health concern that can cause problems for you that have to do with dry skin.

Of course, there are common situations that may lead to more outbreaks of dry skin, too. This includes exposure to winter weather and taking very hot baths or showers.

Working to prevent any of these conditions can help you to avoid dry skin, too.

Tips For Avoiding Dry Skin

With the winter months approaching (or the summer's glaring sun) it is very important for you to take into consideration your skin. The skin that is left exposed and unprotected can often become dry, cracked and painfully raw. Dry skin is often to be blamed for conditions such as this. If you are one that is likely to feel the onslaught of painfully dry skin, consider these tips to help you to avoid dry skin altogether.

1. **Take the time to moisturize.** There are some excellent products on the market that can provide you with excellent benefits in the way of preventing and curing most dry skin conditions. All you need to do is to apply them in the morning and in the evening for relief as well as prevention.
2. **Take care of your skin.** Keeping your skin shielded from the painful effects of the weather is the first thing to do. That means keeping your hands and face covered from cold winter weather. During the summer months, apply a moisturizing sun block for protection for the sun's UV rays that can lead to dry skin as well as other complications.
3. **Don't take very hot showers.** The heat from the water actually causes your body to lose many of the natural oils that it produced to care for your skin's health. In addition to this, you can add a few drops of a health bath oil to your baths. This will greatly help you to improve your skin's moisture control.
4. **Eat a well balanced diet.** Having the right foods in your diet is a must. Your body needs vitamins and minerals to care for every function in your body including your skin's health. You can supplement your diet with antioxidant supplements, too. This will help you to benefit from them because they will flush out the cells, allowing them to function better.
5. **Treat conditions quickly.** A small patch of dry skin is easier to treat than a larger, painfully itchy patch. Take care of your skin as soon as it requires help and you will relieve much of the pain you are experiencing.

Dry skin is something to consider being proactive about. If you are one of the many that will suffer from this condition this winter or in the coming warmer months, it is essential to take care of it now, while your skin's health is still in sight.

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