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Get the itch out of dry winter skin

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Charles E. Crutchfield III, MD is a board certified dermatologist with more than 10 years of experience in dermatology.

This morning he offered up some tips on caring for dry winter skin.

1. Use a gentle nondetergent containing cleanser that won't take away the natural oils in the skin. Also make sure that the cleanser is preservative-free and fragrance-free to avoid skin irritation.
2. Moisturize. The important thing after taking a bath or shower is to seal in the hydration that your skin has achieved during the bath or shower. By applying a rich emollient to the skin after the bath or shower, this will serve several two functions. It seals in the moisture in the skin and also provides a protective barrier for evaporation. Treat the hands, too after every washing.
3. Hydrate by drinking water. The absolute water requirement is different for everyone; however, your body will tell it is normally hydrated when your urine is just a shade off clear.
4. Tips for dry lips: Licking lips will not help dry, chapped lips on the winter months. In fact, it will make it worse. The most important thing is to apply a smooth and soft moisturizing lip treatment such as Aquaphor ointment. This is especially important before going to bed or before going outside in the cold, dry weather.
5. Pay particular attention to your skin when you are traveling on an airplane. The humidity on an airplane can reach as low as 1% and on long flights, it can take a mere 3 hours to take almost all the moisture from your skin and hair. Stay hydrated during the flight, limit your intake of alcohol, and carry your own moisturizer and use it regularly as needed.

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