

Health

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Weathered Winter Skin



December 1, 2008

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Winter is here, which means dry skin is itching its way back into your life. The frigid climate outdoors and low humidity of internal heating can strip skin of critical moisture, leaving it dry, red, and irritated. This season, beat the itch with a skin-care program from Charles E. Crutchfield III, MD, medical director of **Crutchfield Dermatology** in Eagan and a clinical associate professor of Dermatology at the University of Minnesota Medical School. He recommends simple treatments to keep your skin looking and feeling beautiful during the cold months.

Cleanse

Daily grime, sweat, and oil can clog your pores. Coupled with the drying effects of reduced humidity and plummeting wind chill, your face can appear dull and dehydrated well before the holidays. "For winter skin, I recommend cleansing with a gentle, non-detergent cleaning product, such as **Dove**, **Cetaphil**, or **Vanicream** cleansing bar and following it with a good, gentle moisturizer," Crutchfield says.

Hydrate

Submerging in a hot bath might seem like a good idea to melt the winter blues and seek refuge from the icy weather, but it's only a quick fix. In fact, during the cold months, frequent baths and hot showers drink up your skin's moisture, leaving you drier than the Sahara. A study by the **Skin Sciences Institute** found that even a ten-minute bath can significantly decrease your skin's ability to retain moisture. So avoid turning the hot water knob, and make showers an in-and-out mission.

As soon as you step out of the shower, Crutchfield recommends gently patting dry with a cotton towel and immediately applying lotion to seal in all the moisture obtained from the shower. "A moisturizing lotion does two things," Crutchfield says. "It seals in the hydration already achieved and adds a second protective layer." Applying a lotion twice daily, and more if you take frequent showers, will make a huge impact in skin comfort during the winter months. Crutchfield recommends **CeraVe lotion**. "This lotion has a microvesicular emulsion that releases hydration and protection for several hours after the initial application," he says.

Protect

Just because the sun's summer rays are in hibernation doesn't mean you should retire your sunscreen. The winter sky might look cloudy and gray, but the sun is still getting through the muck. "Sunscreen should be used at all times," Crutchfield says. "I recommend a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or greater that also contains both UVA and UVB protection." Slather on sunscreen thirty minutes before going outside, and reapply every thirty minutes to maintain protection. Don't forget to protect your lips. According to Crutchfield, "lip balm should also have sunscreen."

Extra Defense

With the windows sealed and the heat blasting, indoor air can become very dry during the winter. A humidifier can add moisture to the air and keep your skin from drying and cracking. Although it's not a cure-all, Crutchfield says that, along with your artillery of gentle cleansing, hydration, and protection, a humidifier is a helpful component to winning the battle over winter skin.

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