



SADDLEBACK
MEDICAL GROUP

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CARE OF DRY, SENSITIVE SKIN

Dry skin, dehydration of the outer skin layer, is a very common condition – especially among the elderly. It is also found to be associated with other skin diseases such as Ichthyosis, Eczema, and Contact Dermatitis. If severe, dry skin can be associated with redness and itching.

Exposure to environmental factors can also cause dry, sensitive skin. Repeated exposure to solvents, soaps, and disinfectants removes oil from the skin, damaging the skin barrier and increasing water loss up to 75 times the normal. Cold, windy weather literally “pulls” water from the skin producing “winter itch”. Skin becomes dry because it lacks water.

All treatment efforts for dry skin are aimed at replacing water in the skin and trapping it there. Treatment includes the following:

1. Bathing should not be excessive (once every one to two days) and the bath water should be warm in temperature, but not hot. Bath oils are discouraged as they make the tub slippery. In addition, avoid prolonged hot showers – no longer than five minutes.

2. Use only mild soap, and confine the use of soap to the areas of body odor: armpits, groin, and feet. Mild soaps include:

Basis [®]	Neutrogena [®]	Lowilla [®]
Cetaphil [®]	Dove [®]	Oilatum [®]
Emulave [®]	Purpose [®]	Dermocleanser [®]

3. Immediately after bathing, while your skin is still damp, apply a non-medicated lubricating cream or ointment to the total body surface. Examples of such creams are:

Aquacare	Keri [®] lotion	Neutrogena [®] hand cream	Purpose cream
Aquaphor [®]	Lacticare [®]	Neutrplus [®]	Tolerin [®] lotion
Carmol 10 [®]	Lipikar [®]	Nivea [®] cream	Vaseline [®]
Eucerin [®]	Neutraderm [®]	Petrolatum	Amlactin [®] lotion

These creams should be applied to moist skin at additional times during the day and at bedtime.

4. If your physician has prescribed a medicated ointment, while your skin is still damp, apply the ointment to the broken out area(s). Medicated ointment should be applied several other times daily according to the directions.
5. When an itch develops, resist scratching! Apply something cold, such as an ice cube, wet cloth, or just cold water. Cooling stops the itching.
6. Other helpful hints include the use of humidifiers, wearing loose fitting clothing, avoiding wool clothing, and cutting your nails frequently.
7. Stick to your regimen! After improvement occurs, it is still important to continue good skin care.