

Daily Care for your Skin and Hair

Often taken for granted, our skin is the body's protective barrier against the environment. The skin thrives with daily care just like brushing one's teeth. Everyone has a natural oil (sebum) covering their skin, made by tiny glands in the skin. When too much of the oil is removed by frequent use of drying agents, usually soaps, the skin becomes dry which can lead to cracking and flaking. Once cracking occurs the skin is susceptible to inflammation and itching. Everyday factors that may cause drying of the skin include harsh soaps, long hot baths or showers, and too frequent bathing or showering.

Daily Skin Care

In your bath or shower, try to use lukewarm water. Hot water feels good on sore muscles and bones but dries out the skin. Try to limit your time to fifteen minutes or less. Unless you are a teenager, bathing should be done no more than once a day.

Avoid using harsh soaps that dry the skin. Recommended soaps are Dove, Olay and Basis. Deodorant soaps are often very harsh and drying. Even milder are skin cleansers such as Cetaphil Lotion, oilatum AD and Aquanil.

If your skin is dry or sensitive, limit the use of soap to areas that develop an odor such as the armpits, genital area, and feet.

When towel drying, do not rub the skin. Blot or pat dry so there is still some moisture left on the skin.

Next apply a moisturizer to the skin such as Vaseline, Cetaphil or Cerave. Concentrate on areas of your skin that become dry. If you have oily skin you can skip this step.

All areas that are exposed to the sun, such as the face, ears, hands, and back of the neck should have a broad spectrum SPF 15 or greater sunscreen applied daily. There is no difference between a moisturizer containing SPF 15 and a sunscreen containing SPF 15. Sun exposure during youth is most important in the later development of skin cancer, but the facial wrinkles are all mostly due to adult sun damage.

Daily Scalp Care

Dandruff can usually be avoided by shampooing your scalp at least two to three times a week.

Thorough scrubbing of your scalp with your fingertips is helpful to loosen the oils and debris.

Avoid hot water when rinsing the hair, as cool water will add more body to the hair.

Suave and Pert Plus are good inexpensive shampoos. Alternate between your personal favorite shampoos so each will remove residue left by the others.