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**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
**Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

**Don't Let Your Skin Go Dry**

**By Natalie Katsman**

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Water makes up 60% of the human body. Not only blood and other body fluids have water as their main ingredient, water is stored in all body tissues. Cytoplasm, cells and cell walls contain lots of water. Skin is a large water storage, yet it gets dry, itchy and flaky. Why?

Every day 4–8 oz. of water evaporates through the skin, and we don't even notice how it happens. Replenishing water by drinking more fluids is helpful, but does not guarantee smooth and resilient skin. Moisture balance is regulated by chemical reactions in tissues, and is not directly related to the amount of water you drink.

If we could apply water topically, it would not help much either. Skin does feel soft and moisturized right after a bath: it happens because the horny layer (the outermost skin layer), which is formed by dead skin cells, absorbs water. During a bath up to 2 oz. of water can be absorbed by the skin. But this water is not allowed any deeper than the surface cells. Later, within 10 minutes, all this water evaporates, leaving skin dry again.

Human skin has its own mechanism to prevent moisture loss. Our skin cells work hard to create a protective layer. This layer consists of oils, aminoacids, sugar compounds and other elements, either water or oil soluble. All together they bind with water and don't let it evaporate. Water, that is not allowed to leave skin surface, is absorbed by the horny layer cells. The skin becomes softer, smoother and more flexible.

Hot or cold air, low humidity, frequent contacts with water or cleansing solutions ruin the protective layer, and skin loses its natural ability to hold moisture. When water level in the skin drops by 10%, the skin becomes dry, itchy and flaky.

As we age, skin's protection mechanism slows down and skin becomes dry. In some people dry skin is inherited genetically.

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Even though the outermost skin layer is made of dead cells, we have to take care of it. The primary function of the horny layer is protection of deeper skin layers, where new cells are born. Regular use of hydrating creams helps to prevent water loss, restore moisture balance and elasticity of the outer skin layer and help it do its job.

Oils, mucopolysaccharides, and fatty acids are widely used in cosmetics to prevent water loss. The most effective cosmetic ingredients for this purpose are liposomes, ceramides and sphingolipids.

Liposomes are microscopic spheres that can be used to encapsulate water, vitamins or other beneficial ingredients. Because these elements are similar in structure to cell membrane, they are easily utilized by the skin. They can penetrate skin surface, bind with it and release the substances they carry.

Ceramides and Sphingolipids are the elements that hold skin cells together so that the environment can not get in and the moisture can not get out. Lipids are lost with age, and the moisture barrier is weakened. Research shows that applying ceramides topically has the effect of generating ceramide production in the skin, thereby increasing the lipid content and reinforcing the protective barrier.

Look for creams with the above ingredients to keep your skin in its best condition and defy aging.

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Natalie Katsman

Learn skin care secrets, find out how to protect your skin and preserve its youthful and healthy appearance. Visit us at:

### **Dry Skin Care Quiz**

**By Joel Walsh**

Most people who think they know all about dry skin, chapped skin, chafing, redness and other signs of skin dehydration really don't. Take this quiz to make sure you know who your skin's enemies are.

The answers are located at the end of the quiz.

1. What is *\*not\** one of the three most common skin types?

a.) Moist

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b.) Normal

c.) Dry

d.) Oily

2. What is "combination skin"?

a.) Oily to dry

b.) Normal to dry

c.) Oily to moist

d.) Normal to moist

3. Which of the following is not one of the most common locations of dry skin?

a.) Lower legs

b.) Arms

c.) Thighs

d.) Tummy (front of abdomen)

4. Scaling is a symptom of dry skin that is also most commonly called what?

a.) Chafing

b.) Flaking

c.) Cracked skin

d.) Rough skin

5. Which of the following are worst for dry skin in winter (also called "winter itch")?

a.) Fireplaces

b.) Space heaters

c.) Radiators

d.) Forced-air furnaces

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6. The best skin lotions for winter itch are:

- a.) Thick and greasy
- b.) Light and smooth
- c.) Watery and clay-textured
- d.) Spray on

7. In order to avoid chafing when drying off, you should:

- a.) Only dry lightly; do not dry off all moisture
- b.) Dry thoroughly, but pat yourself dry rather than rubbing
- c.) Allow as much of the water to evaporate as possible rather than towel-drying most of it off
- d.) Dry thoroughly and vigorously to dry as fast as possible

Answers:

1. a. moist. The most common types of skin are dry, oily, and normal. Knowing your own skin type, you can find out the bath and body lotions that will work best at moisturizing your skin.

2. c. normal to dry. Combination skin means that you have to use a product that moisturizes your skin without being so strong that it can make your skin oily.

3. d. tummy. According to Medline Plus, the most common areas of your body to suffer dry skin are the arms, lower legs, thighs and flanks (sides of abdomen).

4. b. flaking. According to Medline Plus, scaling, also called flaking, is "visible peeling or flaking of outer skin layers." Some of the worst sources of scaling are psoriasis, lichen planus, and athlete's foot.

5. d. forced-air furnaces. According to Medline Plus, dry skin is often caused by the sudden switch from cold to warm air, and in particular the warm dry air of forced-air furnaces.

6. a. thick and greasy. According to Medline Plus, thick and greasy lotions really do the best job of holding moisture into your skin.

7. b. pat, don't rub. You have to dry off thoroughly to prevent losing skin moisture through evaporation, but rubbing the towel against your skin will damage your epidermis.

Joel Walsh is a contributing author to

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