

Cold weather, with its low relative humidity, wreaks havoc on our skin, making it dry and flaky. Not only is the air drier, but indoor heating further depletes the skin of moisture.

In addition to being significant for appearance reasons, skin health is crucial since it handles numerous vital bodily functions. It shields the body from the numerous viruses and germs that a person is exposed to every day, among other things. Additionally, it guards against the harmful UV radiation of the sun that can harm cells. By experiencing pressure or pain, healthy skin also enables a person to respond to significant changes more effectively. The onset of disorders like dry skin or eczema, itchy, dry, reddish patches or lesions on the skin, can range in severity from person to person.

Frostbite is a type of injury caused by freezing. It leads to a loss of feeling and color in the areas it affects, usually extremities such as the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes. Frostbite can permanently damage the body, and in severe cases can lead to amputation. You may have a greater chance of developing frostbite if you have poor blood circulation or are not properly dressed for freezing temperatures.

So what can we do to help our skin in the winter months?

- Moisturize every day. For normal to dry skin, cream or petroleum-based moisturizers are preferable to lotions. Choose a moisturizer without fragrance or lanolin if you have sensitive skin. After bathing, apply moisturizer straight to your wet skin so that it can help capture surface moisture.
- Don't overdo it when it comes to skin cleansing. The natural moisturizers in the skin are removed by over-cleansing. Washing your hands, feet, and skin folds

once a day is sufficient. It is not required to use soap or cleanser on your trunk, arms, or legs every day, though you can rinse these areas every day.

- Use soap and hot water sparingly. Take quick, lukewarm baths or showers with a non-irritating, non-detergent-based soap if you have "winter itch."
- Defend yourself against the wind. Apply lip balm with petroleum as you shield your face. Both creams containing ceramides and skin protectants made of petroleum work well.
- Prevent becoming too cold. Some people are more susceptible to frostbite or skin conditions in colder temperatures. If the color of your hands or feet changes and is accompanied by pain or ulceration, you should see a doctor right away. You might have frostbite if you experience intense pain in a finger or toe followed by a loss of feeling.
- Sun protection for your skin. Remember that exposure to the sun during the winter might be harmful to your skin. If you intend to spend a lot of time outside, even in the winter, you should use sunscreen with a UV protection factor of 15 or higher.
- Avoid tanning.
- Drink plenty of water.

For more information, contact Meigs Co. Health Dept. at 740-992-6626 Monday through Friday from 8AM-4PM.

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