

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF *DRY AND ITCHY* WINTER SKIN



OSF GUILFORD SQUARE – PLASTIC SURGERY DEPARTMENT

January 2018

The Importance of Hydration

81 Million Americans claim to experience dry, itchy or scaly skin during the Winter months!

Proper hydration is essential for maintaining a healthy skin barrier. Just as the body cannot survive without water, the skin cannot function efficiently without adequate hydration. For the skin to properly protect your body, it needs to be elastic and flexible, which is only possible when there's enough hydration.

Normal, healthy skin is 20-35% water. Each day it loses approximately one pint of water through Trans-Epidermal Water Loss (TEWL), which is the continuous process of water leaving the body and entering the atmosphere via evaporation and diffusion.

When humidity drops in the cold Winter months, there's a dramatic increase in TEWL, as the dry air pulls moisture from the skin. When the skin's water content drops below 10%, it begins to dry out and crack, causing discomfort characterized with redness, itchiness and flakiness.

With less water and hydration in the skin, it struggles to slough off dead skin cells which results in a buildup of dry flaky skin, wrinkling, and an overall aged appearance. Dead skin cell buildup traps dirt and debris, reducing the penetration of topical ingredients to the skin's deeper layers. Without continuous shedding of the dead skin cells...inflammation, acne and dull skin will follow.

A Licensed skincare professional can offer an evaluation of your skin condition during the harsh Winter months to provide recommendations of proper treatment. Microdermabrasion, chemical peels and the correct home care regimen are some of the important treatments necessary to correct and prevent skin affected by dehydration.



Traditional Recommendations

- * Apply a moisturizer every few hours when battling dry skin
- * Take fewer or shorter showers and in cooler water temps during dry skin seasons
- * Avoid the use of harsh soaps, detergents and alcohol based hand sanitizers
- * Apply an SPF 15 or greater every morning, as snow reflects up to 80% of damaging UV rays
- * Using a serum with hyaluronic acid can greatly increase skin hydration, as it can hold up to 1,000 times its weight in water
- * Receiving monthly exfoliation treatments such as chemical peels and/or microderm helps to increase cellular turnover and provides skin a smooth surface to absorb hydrating products
- * Use a cool mist humidifier in your home and office to maintain proper humidity levels
- * Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day, or half of your body weight in ounces for optimal hydration

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