

# Skin care in winter

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During the cold and windy winter days, our skin is exposed to various negative influences from the weather, which can cause it to dry, flake, crack and get irritated. These reasons are why it is necessary to use additional and adequate skin care in the winter time to keep it moist, soft and smooth.

One of the main skin functions is its role of a barrier, preventing the loss of fluids from the surface of our bodies. This barrier is made by fats that form the protective lipid film layer on the surface of the skin. Cold winter air is dry, the amount of natural fats is reduced, and so a larger amount of fluids evaporates from the skin. Winter winds additionally dry and damage the skin. The result is dry, rough skin which is easily affected by itch, irritation, forming of eczemas. Rooms with heated dry and warm air also contribute to skin damage during winter.

Winter worsens the already existing chronic skin diseases such as atopic and seborrhoeic dermatitis, eczemas and psoriasis. Redness and enlarged face capillaries become more prominent due to sudden transitions from colder to warmer rooms. It is necessary to consult a dermatologist in a timely manner to prescribe a therapy before the existing disease worsens.

To prevent drying of the skin and other inconveniences that come with first winter days, we must treat the skin in the following manner:

## Skin hydration

It is necessary to compensate the moisture loss from the skin by using creams based not only on hydrate substances but also on oil. Fats in creams create a thin layer on our skin and do not allow water to evaporate. The creams we use should contain fatty acids and components like natural moistening factors: urea, glycerol, alpha hydroxyl acid which have a greater capacity to bind water. Other supplemented vitamins and nutrients necessary to the skin are also useful. It is recommended to apply creams several times during the day and especially after washing the face, showering, and before going to the cold.

## Sun protection

The winter Sun combined with snow reflection also dries and damages the skin. In the winter time, using sunscreen, with an spf 15 factor at least, should continue for protection from UVA and UVB radiation.

## Showering and washing the skin

Mild water should be used for showering, avoiding long and warm baths, which dehydrate the skin by removing its natural fats. Also, strong antibacterial soaps that degrease the skin additionally should be avoided. Moisturizing creams and emollients should be applied immediately after showering.

## Hand skin care

Hand skin is thinner and more sensitive than the other parts of the body, it has less sebaceous gland, in the winter it is more prone to drying, cracking and eczemas. It is necessary to avoid longer contact with soaps without wearing protective gloves, keeping warm while in cold is required, and also frequent application of emollients with added glycerol and linoleic acid.

## Skin peels

Skin peels help to remove dead cells from the surface and enables better penetration of moisturizing creams. Peels should be carried out once a week. If the skin is already extremely dry, sharp peel masks and alcohol based tonics should be avoided, as the astringent masks that can remove too much of the protective lipid layer of the skin. Skin peels can be professional when performed in dermatology clinic and it stands for **chemical peels**. The mentioned procedure replaces the rough and thickened skin and replaces it with new, rejuvenated skin, richer in collagen and elastine.

## Room fresheners

Room fresheners in the form of aerosols, which provide more moisture in closed rooms with central and other forms of heating, will prevent additional drying of the skin caused by dry and warm air.

## Lip care

Lips are extremely sensitive in winter and cold weather; they easily dry up and crack. It is recommended to use lip balms several times a day, as soon as the feeling of dryness comes. In the evening before bedtime it is desirable to rub lips with a thicker layer of panthenol ointments, to maintain their humidity and tenderness.