

## Nourishing Your Dry Skin

Only in Texas can you have the wide range of temperatures that we have. We can had during the cold months is dry skin. Freezing temperatures, low humidity and heated dry air can make your skin dry, flaky and itch. You can have dry skin anywhere, but it seems more prevalent on your hands.

While dry skin may be uncomfortable for most people, it could be dangerous for those with diabetes because of the threat of infection.

To keep your skin from becoming too dry this winter, try these tips:

- **Add humidity to your home.** Open your dishwasher before it goes through the dry cycle and let your dishes air dry. Keep pans of water simmering on your stove (check frequently to make sure the water doesn't evaporate and never leave it unattended). Portable humidifiers or those that work with your heating system put moisture in the air that will be absorbed by your skin and hair.
- **Use an oil-based moisturizer.** Ointments or heavy creams seal water in the skin and preserve moisture better when the humidity is low. You might want to use a superfatted soap such as Dove<sup>®</sup>, Basis<sup>®</sup>, Keri<sup>®</sup> or Oilatum<sup>®</sup> to help keep moisture in your skin.
- **Use sunscreen.** Before heading outdoors, apply a moisturizing, broad spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 to any exposed areas. Not only does it protect from the sun's harmful UV rays (even in the winter!) but it helps keep moisture in your skin.
- **Frequent bathing or hot showers or baths can strip your skin of natural oils.** Reduce the heat of the water or take shorter showers or baths. Limit your showers or baths to no more than 5 minutes. Deodorant bars, antibacterial soaps, perfumed soaps and skin care products containing alcohol also dry your skin so limit these products.
- **Prevent dry skin.** When you scratch dry, itchy skin, you can break the skin and open the door to bacteria. After you dry off from a shower, you may need an oil-in-water skin cream such as Lubriderm<sup>®</sup> or Alpha-Keri<sup>®</sup>. On cold and windy days, you may need to moisturize often to prevent chapping. Don't forget your lips.
- **Dry off well after washing, using a patting motion instead of rubbing.** Be sure to prevent moisture in the folds of your skin, such as the groin area, between your toes, under the breasts, and in armpits where fungal infections are more likely so dry these areas well. You might want to consider using talc powder to prevent moisture. After patting dry, moisturize while your skin is still damp. You may want to use an oil-in-water skin cream such as Lubriderm<sup>®</sup> or Alpha-Keri<sup>®</sup>. On cold and windy days, you may need to moisturize often to prevent chapping.
- **Drink lots of water unless your doctor advises otherwise.** Staying hydrated helps skin your skin moist and supple.