

# Danger: Dry Skin Season Ahead

## Effective extra ingredients make all the difference in skin cream

(NC)—Dry skin can be a problem at any time of the year, although it is usually worse during colder months when humidity is low. Proper skin care and help prevent and treat dry skin, as well as the itch often associated with it.

The essential purpose of a skin cream or lotion is to keep the skin moist, so most contain lubricating agents. These work best when applied while the skin is still wet; for example, just after a bath or shower. They don't actually add moisture to skin, but they do trap surface moisture onto the epidermal layer and seal it in.

But in addition to these lubricating agents, many creams on the shelves of pharmacies can contain various amounts and combinations of other additives like lanolin, aloe and Vitamin E. Though these have been touted as beneficial, this has not been proven in controlled studies, and in fact, these ingredients may cause allergic reactions.

There is another class of ingredients, such as urea and lactic acid, which are called "humectants". Urea, one such ingredient, actually binds water below the surface of the epidermis, right down to the stratum corneum, the skin-building layer. Urea is an effective moisturizing

factor and keratolytic (exfoliating) agent. On rough, dry skin creams with urea, like Uremol, are very effective and are best used on damp skin immediately after bathing.

It is important when purchasing a skin cream to make sure it contains ingredients that do what you want – moisturize – and don't go overboard with ingredients.

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## Something can be done to keep skin moist

(NC)—Canadians can't change the regular flow of the seasons. But they can change their approach to skin care with positive, preventive actions.

Regulate the indoor environment. Try not to keep room temperature too high,

to moderate moisture loss through the skin. Indoor heating is dry heating; humidifiers can be added to some systems or operated independently.

Protect skin exposure to the elements. Make sure tender skin is covered by

windproof gloves and scarves. Strong wind on a sunny day can be as damaging as extreme cold, so cover up. Consider carrying gloves or mittens and a scarf in the pocket of your jacket or coat so you remember to use them.

Moderate your washing habits. While there may be a psychological boost to showering daily, the net effect of washing frequently with soap will be skin damage. You probably don't need to wash your entire body more than twice a week, with a good sponge bath in between, especially to the armpit area.

Select products that truly benefit the skin. Find a moisturizer that locks in water effectively for you. If you're not sure, ask your pharmacist for a recommendation. It's not always true that the most expensive products provide the best results. And if you have damaged, cracked or reddened skin, look for extra ingredients that can really make a difference, like the urea in Uremol. Products like Uremol replenish, soften and protect the skin.

All these tactics can reduce skin damage, especially in fall and winter.

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## How to beat the elements and retain skin moisture

(NC)—As cooler weather approaches, you can expect children back at school, leaves falling ... and your skin drying out.

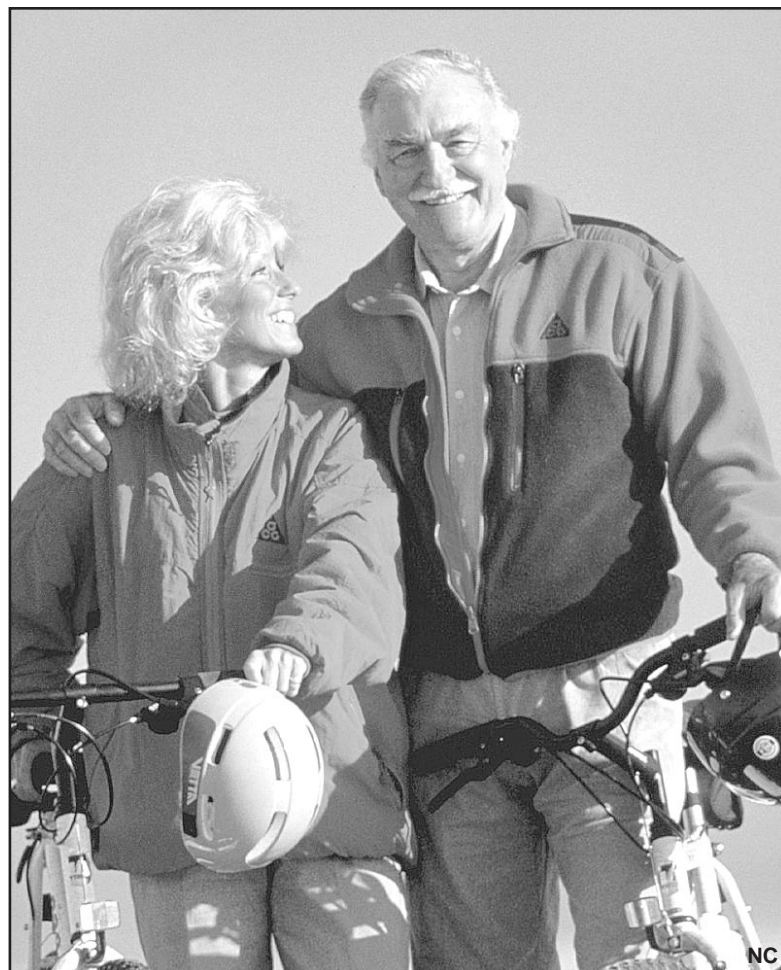
When autumn winds pick up, when toasty central heating kicks back in, those are prime conditions for skin damage due to moisture loss. Exposure to cold weather and then to low humidity environments indoors is a fact of life for Canadians every year at this time.

But those are not the only risks to skin. Skin is at risk when it is exposed to chemical irritants or when it reacts to allergic stimulants. Detergent soaps are effective at removing dirt and grease, but also strip away protective natural moisturizers in the skin.

Some people have an even greater risk for dry skin, if they have underlying skin problems like eczema. Other people work in low humidity or extreme temperatures, or wash hands frequently. All of these conditions may be unavoidable and "just part of the job", but they also contribute to skin damage.

For all these reasons, you can look forward to another season of rough, damaged and itchy skin. But if you're "skin smart", you can develop habits and choose products that keep in moisture and keep out damage. Those that contain urea, an effective moisturizing factor and keratolytic agent that exfoliates and softens skin, are particularly useful. One such moisturizer, Uremol, when used after a shower or bath and before going to bed, can help beat dry skin this season.

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## Start early to save your skin

(NC)—Proper skin-care habits and measures taken to prevent dry skin can go a long way toward keeping skin moisturized. To avoid developing problems, take steps early.

Although it can happen at any time of the year, dry skin is usually worse during colder months when the humidity is low. Cold winds can actually "pull" water from your skin and the air inside your home can get even drier because of the heating system.

Dry skin can be very itchy and your natural reaction is to scratch. But scratching or even rubbing can aggravate the problem. Using a moisturizer like Uremol, which contains urea, a proven

effective moisturizing factor and a recognized exfoliating agent to soften the skin, can help take the irritating "itch" out of skin during cold weather conditions.

Many creams and lotions are available at the pharmacy to effectively hydrate the skin, and most work by sealing in moisture. Petrolatum is a common ingredient. Prevex Cream, for example, provides a total barrier to moisture loss, and is water-resistant. This type of cream is useful for people who must frequently wash their hands or who work in contact with water.

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## Skin smart protection

(NC)— "Skin smart" protection and behavior works from the outside in, and from the inside out. That is, it helps to understand the outer layer of skin, and how skin is formed, so you can do the right things to protect your skin from damage.

The epidermis, the skin's outer layer, is coated with a thin film of sebum. This oily liquid is produced by the skin and normally keeps it smooth and supple, helping lock in moisture. After all, the best way to preserve moisture in the skin is not to lose it in the first place.

When the epidermal barrier is under attack, the skin dehydrates. Both environmental and chemical factors can harm the epidermal barrier. Protecting the epidermis is key to minimizing excess moisture loss and avoiding dry skin.

Dry, itchy skin can affect people of all ages and occurs more frequently as people get older. In fact as many as 85% of older people suffer from this dry skin problem, called "xerosis". Dry skin can be very itchy and the natural reaction is to scratch, but scratching or rubbing can lead to inflammation and make the problem even worse.

Usually, proper skin care and a few common-sense changes in life style when the weather gets colder can prevent "winter itch". Using a moisturizer, like Uremol, which contains urea, provides effective relief to help stop the "itch/scratch" cycle. Uremol replenishes and softens dry skin and protects the epidermis.

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## Effective options for treating dry skin

(NC)—Urea is an important part of the arsenal in the treatment of dry skin (xerosis) and other conditions, including eczema, pruritis, and ichthyosis vulgaris.

Dry skin can affect people of all ages and occurs more frequently as people get older. It can be irritatingly itchy. Unfortunately, the normal reaction is to scratch the itch, which adds to the problem. The "itch/scratch" syndrome usually occurs in cold weather and the symptoms can be very persistent, particularly when the body is at rest, at night, for example.

### Urea

The use of a cream containing urea is an excellent, cosmetically acceptable way to replace moisture loss. Urea is more effective in hydrating and exfoliating the scales seen with dry skin on the palms and soles than traditional lubricating preparations. Preparations with 10% urea (like Uremol 10, available at most pharmacies), remove scaling by disrupting the normal hydrogen bonds in epidermal proteins. The hydrating properties of urea also help relieve "winter itch."

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## How to prevent and treat dry skin

### Advice for fall, usable year round

- Use moisturizers regularly, particularly after bathing. Products such as Uremol contain urea, a moisturizing factor and keratolytic agent that removes dead, dry skin to reveal softer skin.
- Avoid overheating rooms.
- Use humidifiers to keep heated indoor air moist. Humidified air is easier to breathe, too.
- In terms of washing, baths dry out the skin more than showers, and hot or cold water is more drying than warm.
- One or two thorough baths or showers a week can be supplemented by daily sponge baths under the arms.
- Use mild soaps such as Oilatum, or soap substitutes, all available at the corner pharmacy.
- Avoid excessive friction on the skin, such as scrubbing with harsh washcloths or wearing woolen clothing.
- Stay away from irritants or substances which can trigger allergic reactions.
- Bundle up when you go outside. Cover exposed skin in windy or cold weather.
- Be good to your skin. Follow these steps and the advice from your physician or pharmacist. Using a moisturizer like Uremol will effectively treat dryness and even difficult areas such as heels and elbows, softening the skin and providing protection.

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