

SENSITIVE SKIN GUIDELINES

Sensitive skin is characterized by any and all of the following: dryness, irritation, redness, flushing, itchiness, pain, and/or skin that develops a rash or breaks down. There are numerous causes of sensitive skin that Dr. Lee may uncover by examining your skin. In addition to medications that he may recommend, there are several strategies for your daily routine that you can adopt to help your sensitive skin.

Soaps and Hygiene

Soaps can dry your skin by removing the oils it naturally produces and dryness can make your skin even more sensitive. Sebaceous glands produce an oily substance called sebum that acts as your body's natural moisturizer. Sebaceous glands are most prevalent on your face, chest and back, and least concentrated on your arms and legs. This is why your arms and legs can easily become dry. Interestingly, sebaceous glands do not contribute to body odor. Apocrine glands, which are located only in the armpits and groin, are primarily responsible for body odor. This is important for people with sensitive skin since focusing washing on the armpits and groin and sparing other areas can control the majority of body odor.

Deodorant and antibacterial bar soaps can be very drying. Dove Sensitive Skin Bar Soap is a better option. Body washes are also a less drying alternative.

Another important tip is to avoid hot water showers/baths. Hot water, though soothing, can be more drying to the skin. Use warm or lukewarm water and pat dry when finished as opposed to rubbing your skin dry. Apply moisturizer immediately following your shower/bath to lock in the moisture.

Moisturizers

Dry skin is often a major cause of sensitive, irritated and/or itchy skin. A great rule of thumb when selecting moisturizers is to pick one that comes in a jar (i.e. Vaseline petroleum jelly, Eucerin Creme, Cetaphil Cream). Moisturizers that come out of a pump or tube are generally less thick and effective. This is especially important in the winter when the air is cold and dry.

Fragrances

People with sensitive skin should avoid fragrances. The ingredients in fragrances can often cause allergy and exacerbate eczema. Be sure to look for fragrance-free for all your needs (i.e. moisturizers, detergents, soaps, shampoos, fabric softener, etc).

Ingredients to Avoid

- Preservatives such as methylparabens and butylparabens
- Alcohol
- Retinoids and retinol
- Alpha-hydroxy acids
- Antibacterials and deodorants

Tips When Using Cosmetics

- Try to look for products with less than 10 ingredients.
- Avoid waterproof makeup since it will require a potentially drying solution for removal.

Tips When Using Cosmetics continued...

- Throw away expired or old cosmetics as they can harbor bacteria that can aggravate skin.
- Check sunscreen ingredients. Look for zinc oxide or titanium dioxide as they are physical blockers of UV radiation and it is impossible to be allergic to them. Other sunscreen ingredients (i.e. para-aminobenzoic acid) can cause allergy.
- Use facial powder foundation over liquid since powders generally contain fewer preservatives.
- Silicone-based foundations can also be less irritating.
- Pencil eyeliners and eyebrow fillers are preferred since liquid products can contain latex and cause allergy.
- Black eyeliner and mascara are less likely to cause allergy compared to other colors.
- For eye shadows, earth-toned colors are less irritating than darker shades.
- Use minimal amounts of blusher since sensitive skin already tends to flush.
- Nail polishes are a common cause of eyelid allergy so avoid contact with the eyelid skin.

Selecting New Products

One of the most frustrating things about having sensitive skin is finding products that do not irritate your skin. When trying a new product, start with a sample or travel size and apply a small amount behind your ear or on your inner bicep. Repeat this for daily for 5 days. If you do not develop any type of skin reaction, repeat the process now on your upper eyelid. If your eyelid can tolerate the product, it should be safe to use on the rest of your face.