

GUIDE TO PREVENTIVE SKIN CARE



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GUIDE TO PREVENTIVE SKIN CARE INTRODUCTION

Your skin is the largest organ in your body. We protect our heart by exercising and take care of our digestive system by eating healthy foods. So, why do we often neglect our skin, fail to use sunscreen and forget to wash our face?

Good skin care habits can go a long way in preventing future issues, especially when it comes to preventing aging and skin cancer.

Our guide to preventive skin care will help you establish a skin care routine that prevents both minor and major skin issues.



GUIDE TO PREVENTIVE SKIN CARE SELECTING PRODUCTS

When you select skin care products for your skin at a pharmacy or beauty store, it's important to know which ingredients you should avoid.

When it comes to face washes, moisturizers and toners, more expensive products aren't always superior. Anti-aging and acne products have active ingredients that can vary in quality and strength. There may be a pronounced difference between a cheap product and one that is costlier.

Fragranced skin products can be agitating to the skin, especially on the face. Additionally, you'll want to limit use of products that have heavy amounts of alcohol, which is drying. Ingredients such as mineral oil can clog pores and lead to acne — look for the terms “non-comedogenic” and “hypoallergenic” on products.

Finally, don't change your products too often. While it's fun to try new products, try to avoid changing everything at once. Switch out one product at a time. If you don't like a product or it causes irritation, you'll be able to identify the cause.

For high-quality products for skin concerns such as acne and aging, we recommend visiting a board-certified dermatologist. This takes the guesswork out of selecting an effective product and can save you time and money — you'll get something that works the first time.



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CARING FOR DRY SKIN

Dry skin can be uncomfortable, itchy and even painful if it gets so severe that the skin cracks and bleeds. Taking care of dry skin is important, especially in the cold, dry winter months.

If you're suffering from dry skin:

- **Start by shortening the length of time you spend in a hot shower or bath**
- **Try to reduce the temperature from steaming hot to warm**
- **Make sure you're using a mild soap or body wash that isn't harsh, drying or fragranced**
- **After bathing, pat your skin dry with a towel instead of rubbing it**

Immediately after getting out of the bath or shower, apply a gentle moisturizer to the skin to lock in moisture. And while it can be tempting to skip hand washing when your skin is dry, it's important to get rid of harmful bacteria and viruses. Wash your hands as needed, but apply a hand cream afterward.

If your dry skin is persistent, visit a dermatologist. An underlying condition such as eczema may be the cause. Prescription ointments or creams could provide relief.



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COMMON SKIN PROBLEMS

You can treat many minor skin problems at home. If they become persistent, you should see a dermatologist.

Common skin problems include:

- **Cold sores**
- **Hives**
- **Warts**
- **Blisters**
- **Calluses**

A dermatologist should always treat more serious conditions, such as eczema, impetigo and psoriasis.

COLD SORES

Cold sores are small blisters around the lips or mouth, caused by the herpes simplex virus. They're common and start with an itching, burning or tingling feeling around the mouth. When the cold sore appears, it's usually small, fluid-filled and on the edge of the lip.

They will clear up on their own, but using a cream to help reduce the discomfort and increase the healing time can be helpful. Prescription pills can always shorten healing time.

COMMON SKIN PROBLEMS (CONT.)

HIVES

Hives are a raised, itchy rash. Sometimes, they appear across large areas of skin, but it's common to see them localized to a specific body part as well.

These rashes clear up quickly, but taking over-the-counter antihistamines can reduce the itching. If the symptoms are still present after two days, call your dermatologist.

WARTS

We usually find warts on the hands and feet. They present themselves in a range of sizes, but are usually quite small.

They're harmless and will go away on their own, but we can treat persistent warts or warts that are particularly unattractive. A dermatologist may freeze the wart off or provide an at-home treatment.

BLISTERS

Blisters are the result of friction or burning. Friction blisters are most common on the feet as a result of ill-fitting shoes or extended periods of standing or walking. While it's tempting to "pop" the blister and drain the fluid, you should always try to keep it intact. The only exception here is if the blister is extremely painful.

COMMON SKIN PROBLEMS (CONT.)

The “bubble” of fluid provides a natural barrier to germs. Cover it with a bandage, and take care to not further agitate the area. If you must drain the blister, make sure you sanitize your hands, the blister and the area around it.

- 1. Sterilize a clean, sharp needle with alcohol**
- 2. Puncture the blister near its edge (closest to the skin). This is relatively painless.**
- 3. Allow the fluid to drain out, making sure you keep the overlying skin in place**
- 4. Keep the blister covered afterward, and consider using petroleum jelly**
- 5. Remember to change the bandage each day until the blister has healed**

CALLUSES

Calluses are thick, hard layers of skin. They occur when the skin is trying to increase protection from pressure or friction.

We don't generally need to treat calluses unless you have a condition that causes poor blood flow to the feet, such as diabetes.

Eliminating the cause of the friction or pressure will result in the callus disappearing.

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SUN CARE & SKIN CANCER

Over the past 30 years, more people have had skin cancer than all other cancers combined. One in five Americans will develop skin cancer in the course of a lifetime. It is the most commonly diagnosed cancer.

The statistics are terrifying, but you can reduce your risk of skin cancer with easy lifestyle changes and healthy habits.

If you use indoor tanning beds, you must stop immediately. More people develop skin cancer because of tanning than develop lung cancer because of smoking. People who first use a tanning bed before the age of 35 increase their risk for skin cancer by 75 percent.

You can prevent skin cancer by avoiding the sun, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. when it is strongest. Prevent burns at all costs. Wearing UV-blocking sunglasses and wide-brimmed hats can help protect you, as well as a broad spectrum UVA/UVB sunscreen (SPF 30+).

Check your skin every month, and check your children and partner, too. Take photos of any moles that you need to keep record of so that you have a comparison point. If you have concerns, you should see a dermatologist for annual skin exams.



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REDUCING SCARRING

Whether you have a wound from surgery or an injury, the wound will form a scar as it heals. While scarring is inevitable, you can reduce the appearance of the scar.

- **Start by making sure the wound heals correctly**
- **Keep it clean, and keep the wound moist with petroleum jelly**
- **Change the bandage daily to make sure it's clean and follow any advice from your doctor on caring for the wound.**

After the wound has healed, make sure you use sunscreen on the wound. This will prevent discoloration and help the scar fade faster. Most scars do fade over time, but over-the-counter scar products can help fade some scars faster. But, if you have an unsightly scar that you'd like to discuss with a dermatologist, let us know. Sometimes, we can help scarring with cosmetic procedures such as laser treatments and chemical peels.



To learn more about these cosmetic procedures, download our **Guide to Cosmetic Procedures**.

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PREVENTION FOR ATHLETES

Athletes are prone to irritating skin conditions such as rashes and ringworm, a fungal infection that spreads by skin-to-skin contact.

Athletes at all levels can reduce their risk of irritating skin conditions by:

- **Keeping all wounds covered to reduce the risk of infection**
- **Wearing moisture-wicking clothes to keep the skin dry**
- **Wearing sandals in the locker room**
- **After every practice or game, it's important to immediately shower and put on clean dry clothes.**
- **Avoid sitting around in sweaty, wet clothing**
- **Disinfect equipment such as gloves and protective gear on a regular basis**
- **Perform regular skin checks to look for sores, redness, swelling, pus and cuts**

If you see any of these issues, report them to your coach, and make an appointment with a dermatologist immediately.



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AGING

Exposure to the sun or indoor tanning causes aging. Avoiding tanning beds and taking proper precautions when spending time outside will go a long way in preventing premature aging.

Besides protecting yourself from the sun:

- **Eat a healthy, balanced diet full of fruits and vegetables**
- **Limit alcohol consumption**
- **Exercise regularly**
- **If you're a smoker, seek help to quit immediately. Smoking speeds up how quickly skin ages**

Wash your face twice daily with a gentle cleanser, and use a quality moisturizer. If you aren't happy with the way your skin is aging, talk to a dermatologist.

You may be a candidate for one of many products that can reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.



To see our best products for wrinkles, download our **Guide to Cosmetic Procedures**.

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TATTOOS & PIERCINGS

As long as you're smart about tattoos and piercings, they generally don't cause major issues with the skin.

Before getting any tattoo or piercing:

- **Make sure you find a reputable tattoo artist or piercer. You'll want somebody with years of experience and current certifications.**
- **Ask to see photos of their work**
- **Check out the studio to see if it's clean**
- **Talk to their current or former clients**



When getting a new piercing:

- **Make sure the piercer uses new needles and wears gloves**
- **Select jewelry that is hypoallergenic and made from high-grade materials**
- **The piercer should also sterilize the jewelry before use**

Try to put a new tattoo on an area free of moles. A tattoo can make it more difficult to see the earliest signs of skin cancer. Follow all after care instructions, and make sure you keep the area clean. If necessary, cover with a bandage.

Protect your tattoo from the sun, and always avoid tanning beds. UV light can fade some tattoo inks.

If you no longer want a tattoo, you can remove it. But, remember: Home removal kits are not regulated by the FDA and may use unsafe lasers and acids. Always talk to a dermatologist about tattoo removal to learn what your options are.

GUIDE TO PREVENTIVE SKIN CARE NEXT STEPS

If you notice changes in your skin's color, texture or have an increase in adverse reactions for skin care products, you'll want to see a dermatologist. And if you've had persistent issues with acne or rashes that aren't clearing up with over-the-counter products, you should make an appointment.

Annual skin checks are crucial to ensure skin cancer is detected early. If you've never had a skin check or haven't had one within the past year, call us to make an appointment.

Dermatology Center for Skin Health

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GUIDE TO PREVENTIVE SKIN CARE SOURCES

National Health Service

www.nhs.uk

American Academy of Dermatology

www.aad.org

Mayo Clinic

www.mayoclinic.org

The Skin Cancer Foundation

www.skincancer.org

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ABOUT US

At the Dermatology Center for Skin Health, we strive to provide you with top quality care from our experienced, understanding and supportive staff. We work together as a team to ensure we respond to your needs and keep you informed about the products and medications we prescribe.



Dr. Michele Maouad is a highly skilled and experienced American board-certified dermatologist and dermatologic surgeon. She completed medical school at West Virginia University and dermatology residency at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Dr. Maouad established her private practice, the Dermatology Center for Skin Health, in 2005.



Dr. Rola Gharib joined the Dermatology Center for Skin Health in November of 2011. She completed medical school at West Virginia University and dermatology residency at West Virginia University hospitals. Dr. Gharib is a member of the American Academy of Dermatology.