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CARING FOR DRY SKIN

Dry skin need moisture - creams and lotions (emollients) are designed to add water to the skin along with protective oils to prevent evaporation. The most important time to apply a lotion is right after a bath, shower, or hand-washing, because hot water and soap remove natural skin oils which protect and lubricate the skin. Oils in emollient creams "seal in" the water that the skin has absorbed, thus preventing drying and chapping. It is especially important to apply emollient creams to damp skin, and you will find that they are easier to apply then.

Bath oils are not as effective as emollient creams, they do not hold moisture as well, and leave tubs slippery. If you DO USE them, they should not be added to the water until you have soaked for 10-15 minutes- or, better yet, smooth them on the skin after you get out of the shower or bath.

Creams and certain ointments hold and attract water to promote skin rehydration; other types of ointments repel water and protect the skin. All of the preparations listed here are available without a prescription.

Creamy and Emulsion Ointments

Less greasy, more easily removed (require more frequent application): Cetaphil lotion, Complex 15, Keri Lotion, Lubriderm Cream, Moisturel, Nivea Cream, Nutraderm Cream, Purpose Dry Skin Cream.

Water-absorbent Ointments

More lubricated and occlusion (apply to damp skin, hold moisture in): Aquaphor, Eucerin Cream and Lotion, Unibase, Neutrogena Norwegian Formula, Vaseline Petroleum Jelly.

Urea and/or Lactic Acid Containing Creams

Soften and remove scales and decrease itching (may sting broken skin): Aquacare/HP, Carmol-10, Nutraplus (10% urea), Lacticare.