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# 7 Skin Problems & Solutions

What's making you look older (and less healthy) than you are? by Colleen Moriarty

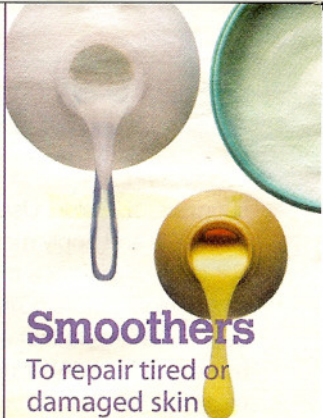
**No matter what** you are (or are not) wearing, your skin can be your best accessory. Smooth, supple and soft all over, at any age it can be a sign of inner and outer beauty. But when it is neglected, or when you are not eating or exercising as you should, it can become inflamed, dry or prematurely wrinkled. Here, we look at how you can handle seven of the most common skin problems.

## Dryness

**What happens** "Hormones are the cause of dry skin in both men and women," says Kathy Fields, M.D., cofounder of Rodan & Fields Dermatologists in San Francisco. "As we age, our declining hormones negatively affect the hydration in the skin. There is less moisture and an increase in water loss. It is more abrupt with women as they reach menopause, and occurs more slowly in men."

In winter, colder, drier outdoor air and indoor heating systems further dehydrate the skin.

**Solutions** Head off dry skin by taking shorter, faster showers using the coolest water you can tolerate,



## Smoothers

To repair tired or damaged skin and help prevent wrinkles, try **L'Oréal Paris Skin Genesis Daily Treatment Eye Serum and Skin Genesis Intensive Treatment Deep-Action Night Complex**; \$19.99 at chain drug, food and other retailers nationwide. Five-day turnaround: **DDF Wrinkle Resist plus Pore Minimizer** has a vitamin peptide complex, glycerin and advanced amino peptide that renew and hydrate the skin; \$85 at select retail shops and online at [ddfskincare.com](http://ddfskincare.com).



# facefacts

suggests Dr. Fields. Use mild, creamy cleansers and apply moisturizer to still-damp skin after a morning shower and at night before going to bed. Best bets: moisturizers that contain alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) or urea. "AHAs and urea offer skin a two-for-one: They act as humectants, trapping water molecules in the skin, which leave skin hydrated, and they slough off dead skin cells," she says.

**Another tip:** Try wearing cotton gloves over well-moisturized hands at nighttime. When you wake up, your

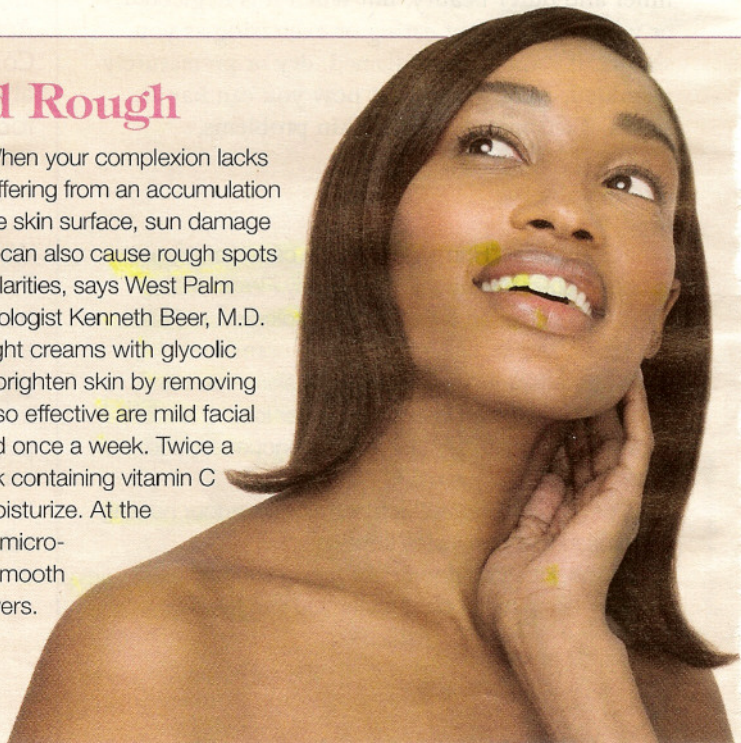
skin will feel smoother and more supple.

When dryness is accompanied by redness, cracking and itchiness, use a heavy moisturizer and hydrocortisone cream, says Dr. Fields. If that doesn't work, consult a dermatologist. You may have a more serious skin condition, such as atopic dermatitis, psoriasis or eczema, which are not caused by neglect or dry air. There is a genetic component to eczema, for example, demonstrating that this condition is, in part, inherited. Your dermatologist can prescribe medications to help

## Dull and Rough

**What happens** When your complexion lacks luster, it may be suffering from an accumulation of dead cells on the skin surface, sun damage or smoking, which can also cause rough spots and pigment irregularities, says West Palm Beach, FL, dermatologist Kenneth Beer, M.D.

**Solutions** Use night creams with glycolic acid or retinols to brighten skin by removing dead skin cells. Also effective are mild facial scrubs, when used once a week. Twice a month, use a mask containing vitamin C to brighten and moisturize. At the doctor's office, try micro-dermabrasion to smooth uneven surface layers.



strengthen your skin's barrier function and soothe persistent irritation.

## Rosacea

**What happens** If your skin flushes and blushes easily, you may have rosacea, a skin condition that can affect anyone, but especially fair-skinned people. The hallmark of rosacea is flushing on the face, nose and cheeks, which is sometimes accompanied by visible capillaries that can appear to be broken or can even look like pustules. Rosacea isn't acne, but it can be mistaken for it.

The cause of rosacea is unknown, but according to Mary Lupo, M.D., a New Orleans dermatologist and immediate past president of the Women's Dermatologic Society, "The most common theory is that blood vessels dilate—perhaps due to neurological stimulation—and trigger inflammation. Rosacea is often hereditary. Sunlight may also be a factor, because it causes inflammation and dilation of small vessels near the skin's surface. So, as with many conditions, rosacea is multifactorial."



**Atopic dermatitis can affect anyone, not just babies and children.**

If you think you may have this condition, check out the symptoms online at

**RemedyLife.com/skin**



## Your Diet

**How you nourish** your skin has a direct health and beauty benefit. "Foods can be pro-inflammatory or anti-inflammatory," says Nicholas Perricone, M.D., a dermatologist and author of several best-selling books. (Some critics dispute Dr. Perricone's assertions, but he is quite adamant.)

### Face-friendly foods include:

- ✦ Colorful fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as low-glycemic carbohydrates such as whole grains, beans and lentils.
- ✦ Cold-water fish (wild Alaskan salmon, halibut, sardines, herring, anchovies, etc.), nuts, seeds and olive oil, all of which contain healthy fats, such as omega-3.
- ✦ Water—six to eight glasses of water per day—and antioxidant-rich green tea.
- ✦ Fish, shellfish, poultry and tofu, which contain protein. Protein does not cause spikes in blood sugar, which speeds up aging.



**Solutions** Avoid sun exposure and use zinc-based sunblocks; some other types of screens can irritate sensitive skin. To prevent redness, avoid harsh cleansers and soaps and chemical exfoliants (retinoids, alpha hydroxy acids and glycolic acids). Steer clear of spicy foods, alcohol and heat (cooking over a grill).

Over-the-counter products containing sulfur and benzoyl peroxide can treat the condition, says Dr. Fields. And your dermatologist can prescribe oral antibiotics and topical creams. A study in *Lasers in Surgery and Medicine* shows certain pulsed-dye laser treatments are also effective for treating rosacea.

## Adult Acne

**What happens** Up to 50 million Americans suffer from acne. Hereditary predisposition and hormonal fluctuations contribute to flare-ups, says Diane Berson, M.D., an assistant professor of dermatology at New York-Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. Also, some medications, such as steroids and antidepressants, may bring on blemishes. Stress is a trigger, too: Adrenal hormones, released when we feel stress, increase oil production and sweating on the skin surface. If the oils mix with bacteria at the hair follicles,

breakouts can occur. For women, breakouts can happen around week three of their menstrual cycle.

**Solutions** Treat breakout zones (forehead, nose, jawline, chin or back) with a salicylic acid-based cleanser at the start of a stressful time, before breakouts appear. A dermatologist can prescribe retinoid creams to keep pores clear and antimicrobials or antibiotics to keep bacteria (and breakouts) at bay.

## Spots

**What happens** "Brown spots, freckles and liver spots are not—as many people think—a result of natural aging," says Dr. Fields, "but rather of sun damage."

Acne breakouts and trauma caused by picking pimples and blackheads can also result in discolored spots called post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation. Being faithful to your sunscreen and maintaining an acne-prevention regimen are the best ways to prevent brown spots.

**Solutions** A topical lightening agent, hydroquinone, is the gold standard for treatment, but may require repeated use, under the care of an expert doctor.



**Download a complete booklet on psoriasis management and treatment at [RemedyLife.com/psoriasis](http://RemedyLife.com/psoriasis)**



A close-up portrait of a woman with blonde hair, smiling broadly. Her hand is visible at the top of the frame, resting on her head. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

## Sagging Skin

**What happens** As we age, skin can lose its elasticity and begin to sag. "Very often, sagging is genetic and beyond your control, but certainly you should avoid sun exposure, and don't smoke," says Dr. Berson.

**Solutions** Try firming creams that contain special plant extracts and micro-polymers to help create a temporary support network for the skin.

## Wrinkles

**What happens** Over time—usually between ages 25 and 30—skin begins to lose collagen and the elastin fibers that support the structure of skin. To slow that natural process, use sunscreen and avoid smoking.

**Solutions** Treat wrinkles at home with antioxidant creams and light chemical peels, says Kenneth Beer, M.D., a West Palm Beach, FL, dermatologist. And up your ZZZs. "Sleep is very important for the skin, because that is when skin repairs itself."

## Skin Secrets, Revealed!

Cosmetic dermatology experts from across the country share their best beauty secrets

**Michelle Yagoda, M.D.**, a NYC-based facial plastic surgeon: "Don't wash your face twice a day—do it only at night. Leave the natural oils on the skin in the morning by just rinsing with cool water and patting dry."

**Kenneth Beer, M.D.**, a West Palm Beach, FL, dermatologist: "Stop smoking! It's the worst thing you can do to your skin." And "apply green tea topically every day to fight fine lines and wrinkles."

**Kathy Fields, M.D.**, a San Francisco-based dermatologist: "If my legs are really dry, I slather on a lactic acid-

based moisturizer, wrap my legs in cling wrap, and let them soak in for about an hour. It's a dermatologists' trick that is used to help drive a cream's active ingredients deeper into the skin."

**Mary Lupo, M.D.**, a New Orleans-based dermatologist: "My secret is that I alternate between products that contain tretinoin, lactic acid and magnesium ascorbyl phosphate—my core ingredients." ■

## Rimes to Reason

**LeAnn Rimes—Close Up and Personal**

This country-music darling (right) takes time out to talk with *REMEDY* about her struggle with psoriasis and how she keeps it under control. If you are looking for inspiration, you can find out how she copes and read about her hopes by visiting us online at [RemedyLife.com/general](http://RemedyLife.com/general)

