

STAVING OFF THE WINTER ITCH... HOW TO KEEP YOUR SKIN MOISTURIZED DURING COLDER MONTHS

By Dermatology Associates

Winter brings harsher weather and colder temperatures, and as the season changes so does your skin. Now is the time to prepare your skin for the winter weather ahead.

During the winter months, it is important to moisturize your body and face more often than in the summer. This is largely due to the lower humidity levels. The air gets much dryer in the winter due to winter air not being able to hold much water. This loss of water causes a reduction in the skin's primary function – acting as a barrier. It is important to use cleansers and soaps that are less drying and fragrance free in the winter months. Good choices for body cleansers are *CeraVe® Hydrating Cleanser and Free and Clear Liquid Cleanser*. One of our favorite body moisturizers for the winter is *EltaMD®'s Moisture Rich Body Creme*, which is enhanced with ceramides that deeply moisturize and nourish dry, flaky skin and feels luxurious when applied. Another restorative moisturizer is *CeraVe® Moisturizing Cream*, which is both economical and excellent at barrier repair.

If you have eczema (atopic dermatitis), winter is your danger season. Generally, people with eczema suffer from dry, irritated skin. Eczema is also known for its intense itch. Patients with eczema should try *Avène XeraCalm A.D. Cleansing Oil*, and *Avène XeraCalm A.D. Lipid Replenishing Cream or Balm*. Patients with eczema also need to keep on top of flares and try to avoid products that contain fragrance. Purchase fragrance free fabric softener and laundry detergent. Even shampoo and conditioners should be fragrance free, such as *Vanicream Free & Clear Shampoo and Conditioner*, as well as moisturizers and soaps. Try to avoid wool and polyester as these materials can be itchy and can cause sweating.



Psoriasis sufferers are most likely to have flare-ups in the winter season. It may be due to the lack of ultraviolet light, but certainly dry weather doesn't help. We recommend using *Avène Akérat Smoothing Exfoliating Cream* for body moisturizer. It contains salicylic, urea, and lactic acids, which relieves the discomfort of rough, flaky and thick skin that is often associated with psoriasis.

Excellent skincare may stave off "Winter Itch." Winter itching occurs because the air and the skin is dry, yet wearing heavy clothes causes sweating. If you have thick, dry, scaly elbows or heels, try *Glytone Ultra Heel & Elbow Cream* for relief. This unique smoothing cream helps to soften callused areas. Hand sanitizers are a good alternative if you wash your hands frequently. Apply hand cream after each hand-washing. *Avène Cicalfate Hand Cream* is excellent for extremely dry or cracked hands. If the skin on your hands needs more help, apply petroleum jelly on them before bed.

Overall, remember to:

- keep hydrated
- run a humidifier in your home
- stay moisturized
- limit bathing to under 10 minutes
- keep water temperature lukewarm
- avoid irritating materials

These suggestions will help you come through the winter with much healthier—and less itchy—skin. If these symptoms do not diminish or if they are extreme, please visit your dermatologist. Dermatology Associates has three locations in the Tri-Cities to serve you.

Sources:

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**DERMATOLOGY
ASSOCIATES**
www.tricityderm.com

Kingsport (423) 246-4961
2300 West Stone Drive

Bristol (423) 764-7131
3183 West State Street

Johnson City (423) 928-9014
1021 West Oakland Avenue