

HEALING CHAPPED HANDS & LIPS

By Dermatology Associates

February brings Valentine's Day, but winter brings cold temperatures and harsh weather. Winter can be very hard on our skin, and especially on those areas exposed more. When we go outside in the winter, we cover up the rest of our body, but many times we leave our face and hands exposed to the cold dry air. Many people get cracked, chapped, and dry lips and hands during this time. Also, this time of year is cold and flu season, causing many to wash their hands more frequently. This can make your hands even drier.

To prevent dry, chapped hands you should begin to use a moisturizer before there are any signs of dryness. Apply moisturizer frequently to your hands throughout the day. Moisturizers work best when applied to damp skin. Applying the product to damp skin will lock in this water and keep it from evaporating from the skin. One of our recommended hand creams is made by *Avene*®. *Cicalfate Restorative Hand Cream* is a rich, nourishing formula that helps restore and protect very dry, cracked hands.

If your hands are chapped and dry, you should protect them from further irritation. Wearing rubber gloves when using house cleaners, washing dishes, immersing hands in water, or even handling acidic foods like tomatoes and citrus could be a helpful change to your daily routine. Continue to apply moisturizer throughout the day after you wash your hands. Also, a good habit at bedtime would be to apply an emollient moisturizer to the hands and wear cotton gloves for extra moisture absorption. We recommend *Allerderm SoftTouch™* cotton gloves and carry these in our Cosmetic Centers.

The skin on our lips is delicate and thin and often-times left exposed to harsh winter elements. Unlike other parts of the skin, lips do not contain oil glands. This causes them to be more vulnerable to weather induced chapping. Usually, you can treat dry lips with simple at home treatments. Just as with hands, make sure lips have enough moisture. Apply a lip balm or ointment



throughout the day. It is also helpful to apply your lip balm at night before going to bed. This can help to lock in hydration to the skin and also help heal splits or cracks. Avoid lip products that contain menthol, camphor or eucalyptus. These ingredients can dry your lips and make them worse. An excellent lipid based product to help moisturize and restore those dry, cracked, chapped lips is *Epiceram-L™ Lip Care*.

Exposure to the sun can also cause dry and chapped lips. Make sure to keep your lip area protected with a lip product that contains SPF, even during the cold, winter months. A great product for year-around care of lips with SPF 31 is *EltaMD® UV Lip Balm*. If your lips continue to chap and do not improve, you should consider seeing a dermatologist.

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Dry skin. (n.d.). Retrieved January 12, 2018, from <https://www.aad.org/public/diseases/dry-sweaty-skin/dry-skin#tips>

Dermatologists' top tips for relieving dry skin. (n.d.). Retrieved January 12, 2018, from <https://www.aad.org/public/skin-hair-nails/skin-care/dry-skin>