5 Common Causes of Dry Skin

Dry skin is a common problem that can leave skin looking older, dull and wrinkly, often with a rough or flaky texture. Treating and preventing skin problems effectively will depend on the cause, so it's important to identify the reason for dry, flaky or scaly skin. Here are 5 common causes of dry skin.

Medical Conditions

Dry skin can be caused by several medical conditions, including diabetes, thyroid problems and hormone imbalances. Some skin conditions, such as eczema and psoriasis, can also cause dry, flaky or scaly patches of skin. In addition, hormone replacement therapy and medications for common health complaints, including high blood pressure and acne, are known to cause dry skin in some people. If medications are leading to skin problems, your doctor may be able to prescribe an alternative treatment.

Nutritional Deficiencies

Low levels of some vitamins, minerals and nutrients can lead to dry skin and common skin complaints. Vitamin C is needed for the production of collagen, which helps to keep skin smooth and supple, while vitamin E is needed for the renewal of healthy skin cells. Eating a balanced diet that incorporates plenty of lean protein, fresh vegetables, fruit and nuts is the best way to ensure the long-term health of your skin. Nutritional supplements can also help to boost vitamins and nutrients in the body, aiding the production of healthy skin cells.

Soaps and Shower Gels

Soap and harsh shower gels strip away the skin's protective oils, leaving dry and damaged skin. Bath foam can also contain harsh ingredients that dry out the skin. Choose fragrance-free products that use gentle ingredients and minimal preservatives. Opt for bath and shower creams that contain moisturizing properties, rather than foams and gels. In addition, avoid abrasive sponges, loofahs and body brushes, as these can all disrupt the body's natural oil production.

Water
Prolonged contact with water can dry out skin and prevent oil production. Long baths and hot showers can strip oil from the skin in a similar way to soap. To reduce drying of the skin, try taking cooler baths or showers and spending less time soaking. In addition, swimming pools contain chemicals and contaminants that can damage skin, so it's important to take a quick shower after swimming.

**Moisturizers and Body Lotions**

Some moisturizers and body lotions, particularly those containing alcohol or strong fragrances, can dry out skin and even lead to spots, blemishes and skin reactions. Choose alcohol-free moisturizing creams with a thick and greasy texture, as these are usually best at sealing in moisture. Alternatively, natural oils, such as olive, almond or avocado oil, make excellent moisturizers and are suitable for most skin types.

Dry skin is a common problem that can be the result of many different factors. Eating a balanced diet and developing a good skin care routine are important for the production of healthy skin cells. However, dry skin can sometimes be caused by health conditions that need medical treatment, so it's important to consult a doctor for long-term skin problems.