

# Dry winter skin – guidance from a guru

It's that itchy, scratchy time of year. Today our guest blogger, dermatologist Mary Toporcer MD, gives us hints on how to combat dry skin. For the past 21 years, Dr. Toporcer has practiced general medical dermatology in Doylestown, PA. She did her dermatology training at Hahnemann University and at St Christopher's Hospital, both in Philadelphia, PA.

Many patients suffer from severe dry skin (xerosis) in the winter when the air is cold and the humidity low. Those who are atopic (have a personal or family history of eczema, allergies, asthma, hayfever or sinus problems) are much more affected by their environment. A few MUST DO's include:

- ☒ 1. Moisture every day especially after bathing with Cerave Cream or Lotion. It contains ceramides which "waterproofs" the skin and keeps moisture in, but without that greasy feel.
- 2. Use gentle soaps such as Dove in the shower and keep the shower water luke warm, not hot. Hot water just irritates and ultimately dries the skin even more. It also increases itch.
- 3. Avoid irritants such as anti-static sheets in the dryer. Even if they say "free", they still put a coating on your clothing in an effort to prevent it from sticking together. This substance is very irritating to dry, sensitive skin. Liquid, fragrance-free fabric softener is much gentler on skin.
- 4. Lastly, for those terribly dry, scaly, fissured hands and feet, try vaseline or Aquaphor under the soft stretchy gloves and socks that you can buy at Bath and Body Works...they're often impregnated with aloe for extra moisture.

