



Ch-Ch-CHANGES!

PROBLEM | *Your complexion feels downright reptilian*

A combination of dry winter air and underactive oil glands (*thank you, hormones!*) can give new meaning to “feeling uncomfortable in your own skin.” Here, how to *hydrate*—stat

» **A new sensitivity**

If frigid, dry air seems to irritate your face even more this winter than in years past, you're not imagining things. One more inconvenient truth about aging: After 35, the skin's protective barrier becomes thinner, more fragile and dotted with microscopic holes, all of which make your complexion more vulnerable in harsh weather conditions, says Elizabeth Tanzi, MD, a Washington, D.C., dermatologist. Factor in years of unprotected sun exposure and some less-than-gentle

grooming habits (microdermabrasion addiction, anyone?), and you have a recipe for skin that's dry, itchy and red all the time. So how do we get back to normal?

» **Find a gentler cleanser** Leave acid-based cleansers (with fine-line-fighting ingredients such as glycolic, salicylic and alpha-hydroxy acids) for the warmer months, when your skin produces more oil, says Fredric Brandt, MD, a dermatologist with practices in New York City and Miami. Instead, cleanse with creamy, moisturizing face washes that have minimal active ingredients, like Olay Professional Pro-X Restorative Cream Cleanser (\$20; drugstores) or Dr. Brandt Anti-Irritant Comforting Cleanser (\$40; sephora.com). These gentle formulas remove makeup and excess dirt without overstripping the natural oils in your skin.

» **Rethink your retinoids** According to almost every dermatologist on the planet, retinoic acid (a form of vitamin A found in prescription-strength products such as Retin A) is the gold standard in anti-aging skin care. But it can thin the skin slightly, leaving users extra susceptible to windburn and chronic irritation in cold, dry weather. So here's the plan: If you're

currently using Retin A or a similar formula, like Tazorac, consider switching to Refissa or Renova, retinoic acid creams that have an emollient, anti-inflammatory base, says David Bank, MD, a New York dermatologist. Can't tolerate a retinoid of any kind right now? Consider an altogether different anti-aging treatment during the winter months. "A product with peptides boosts your collagen production without drying side effects," says Brandt. We like: Shiseido Benefiance NutriPerfect Night Cream (\$89; sephora.com) and Olay Regenerist Daily Regenerating Serum (\$20; drugstores).

» **Stock up on ceramides** Applying either creams or lotions that contain ceramides—lipids that plug the holes in your skin's compromised barrier layer—helps minimize moisture loss and keeps irritating particles from getting into your skin. Most experts also recommend slathering on a ceramide-rich product while your skin is still damp (post-shower) to seal in all those water molecules. "Every little bit of moisture helps," says Bank. We like: Elizabeth Arden Ceramide Plump Perfect Ultra Lift and Firm Moisture SPF 30 (\$68; elizabetharden.com) and First Aid Beauty Ultra Repair Cream to Go (\$15; sephora.com). ☞

SOS FOR SERIOUSLY DRY SPOTS



ELBOWS, KNEES, HEELS |

These areas often look and feel roughest because they don't shed dead cells as efficiently as the rest of the body, says Fredric Brandt, MD. A moisturizer that contains lactic acid (gentler than fruit acids like the alpha-hydroxyes), such as AmLactin Moisturizing Body Lotion (\$15; drugstores), will soften dead cells, allowing buildup to be washed away easily.

HANDS | Harsh weather plus the exceptional thinness of the skin on our hands is a recipe for painful chapping, says Elizabeth Tanzi, MD. Her go-to remedy: "Put on petroleum jelly, then slide on a pair of cotton gloves overnight." If your cuticles are red and tender, nothing beats a pre-bedtime coating of good old A+D First Aid Ointment (\$4; drugstores).

LIPS | When they're dry and uncomfortable, it's natural to lick them. Then do it again. And yet again. But all that licking can actually make things worse, because the saliva evaporates, taking with it any moisture from your lips and leaving them chronically dry. A better strategy, says Amy Derick, MD, a dermatologist in Barrington, Illinois, is to use an occlusive balm like petroleum jelly or Aquaphor (\$6; drugstores). It will keep your lips feeling moist and inhibit water evaporation.

Shopping List

BRING BACK THAT SMOOTH-SKIN FEELING WITH ONE (OR ALL) OF THESE FAST-ACTING MOISTURE BOOSTERS.



1 DOVE WINTER CARE BEAUTY BAR

(\$7; drugstores)
This is the Cadillac of Dove soaps. In addition to being one quarter moisturizing cream, the bar is spiked with sunflower oil, which helps minimize moisture loss once you're out of the shower.



2 CLINIQUE MOISTURE SURGE FACE SPRAY

(\$20; clinique.com)
Spritz on this alcohol-based spray to instantly relieve an itchy, irritated complexion. Bonus: can be sprayed on top of makeup as well.



3 HUMAN UNDER BALM

(\$18; humanunderbalm.com)
Holy cow! This rich balm (best used overnight) has been reformulated for human faces, soothing windburn and Redn A-sensitized skin.



4 CUREL SENSITIVE SKIN REMEDY BODY LOTION

(\$8; drugstores)
Packed with ceramides, this treatment reinforces a damaged barrier layer, holding water in and keeping irritants out.