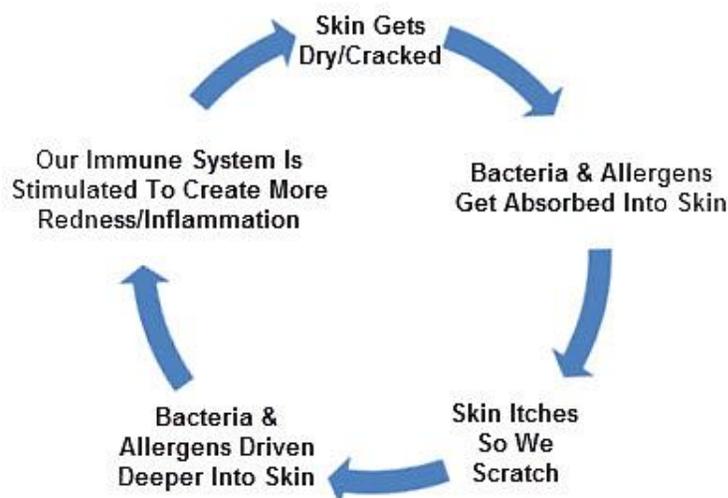


Dry Skin

Dry skin is a problem which is simply annoying for some, while for others it creates significant discomfort. Not only does dry skin tend to itch more, but it can also aggravate certain skin conditions such as *eczema* and *psoriasis*.

It's important to understand that when we talk about 'dryness', we're not just referring to a lack of moisture. Instead, what really counts are the lipids (or 'oils') within the skin.

When our skin's natural oils are lost, the outermost layer becomes dry and cracked, which allows allergens, irritants and bacteria to enter. For those with sensitive skin, this can create redness and itching which then causes them to scratch, opening the skin more, allowing additional bacteria and allergens enter, and a vicious 'itch-scratch' cycle is created:



The number one way that we strip our skin of its natural oils is through improper or overly-aggressive bathing. If dryness of your skin is a problem, please follow these steps:

- 1) **Do not take long, hot showers or baths.** Taking a long, hot shower may be relaxing, but it's one of the easiest ways to dissolve the natural oils from your skin. This isn't to say that you need to take cold showers or baths, either. Just keep the shower or bath water comfortably warm, but stay in just long enough to get the job done.
- 2) **Avoid harsh cleansers and instead use brands such as Dove[®], Cetaphil[®], or CeraVe[®].** A mild cleanser will be gentle on your skin and less likely to strip your own natural oils.

- 3) **When you moisturize, use an unscented moisturizer that contains 'ceramides' which mimic our skin's natural lipids.** An example would be Cerave^â. It's also preferable to apply moisturizer within 3 minutes of getting out of the shower or bath.
- 4) **This is probably the most important - Do not regularly use soap all over your body.** Remember that the average person who works indoors in a clean, air-conditioned environment simply doesn't need to aggressively cleanse their skin on a daily basis. Significant body odor can only be created in three areas: our underarms, our bottom/groin area, and our feet. These are the areas which can be washed daily with cleanser without creating excessive dryness. For adults past puberty, most of the trunk as well as the 'extremities' (shoulders to hands and hips to ankles) *cannot* create significant body odor. The sweat produced in these areas is water-soluble, meaning that water alone is sufficient to remove any sweat accumulation.

Following the above recommendations alone will alleviate dry skin in the vast majority of patients. If despite following these measures you continue to suffer from excessive dryness, please talk to your dermatologist about other available treatment options.