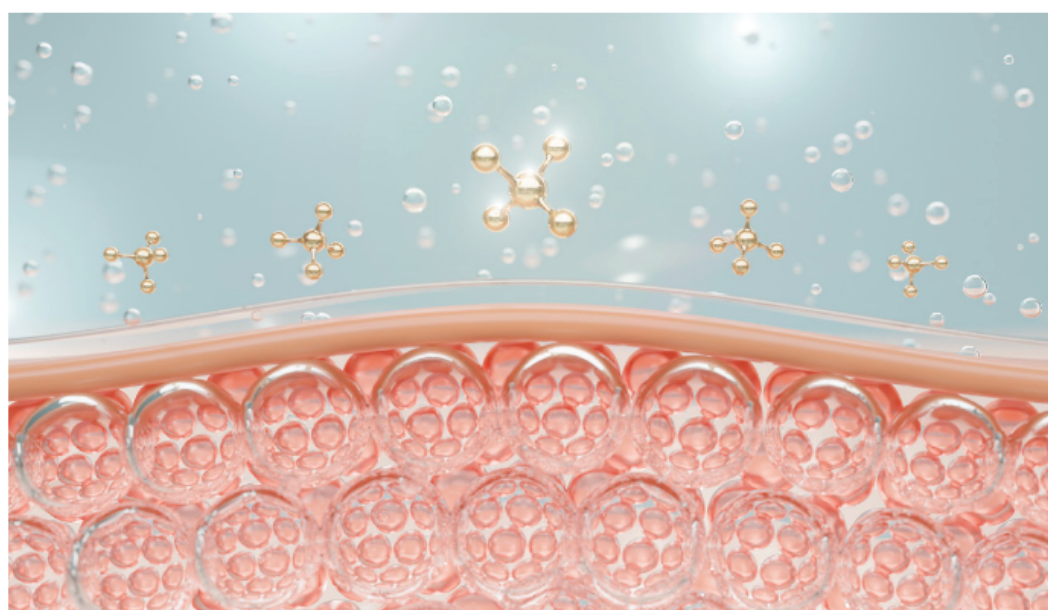


contains melanin, which is responsible for your skin's color. No blood supply is routed to this layer; it's made up mostly of keratin cells, which are constantly being shed and replenished. These cells, the keratinocytes, grow at the deepest layer of the epidermis, called the basal layer, and gradually push their way outward toward the topmost layer, called the stratum corneum, where they flake off or get abraded when you scratch an itch or your clothing rubs against them. (Dr. Ferris points out that when you're cleaning your home, much of the dust sucked into your vacuum comes from your own skin.) It takes about four weeks for new cells to make their way to the top, which means you get a fresh new outer layer of skin every month.



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Take care of the skin that takes care of you

Over time, of course, your skin changes: You accumulate sun damage, scars, and wrinkles and lose collagen and subcutaneous fat, which are responsible for the plump, rosy cheeks of a child, explains Dr. Ferris. But taking care of your skin can help keep it strong. The most important way to do this is by protecting it against the sun's damaging UV rays, says Dr. Ferris, who advises wearing sunscreen or sun-protective clothing whenever you're outside. You'll want to moisturize regularly to lock in hydration, and quit smoking and vaping if you haven't already: Nicotine and other chemicals in traditional and electronic cigarettes can make skin age faster.

Common SKIN CONCERNS, solved

BY MARYGRACE TAYLOR

EVEN WHEN YOU DO ALL THE RIGHT THINGS TO KEEP YOUR SKIN HEALTHY, rashes, bumps, and redness happen. These are your body's way of telling you something is going on.

ECZEMA

▶ WHAT IT IS:

Eczema is an umbrella term for a group of conditions that cause dry, itchy skin. The most common is atopic dermatitis (AD), an inflammatory skin disease caused by an overactive immune system response. AD usually starts in childhood, and while some people outgrow it, for others it can stick around.

▶ WHY IT HAPPENS:

AD occurs when the skin's protective barrier

doesn't function properly, which may be due to genetics or environmental factors. "When the skin's natural barrier is disrupted there is increased moisture loss, which can contribute to dryness and inflammation," says Marisa

Garshick, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist in New York City.

▶ WHAT TO

WATCH FOR: Intensely dry, itchy patches that may appear red, hard, or thickened. Eczema can show up anywhere,



but "it often develops inside the elbows, behind the knees, or on the face," says Dr. Garshick.

▶ HOW TO DEAL:

"Moisturize twice per day with a thick cream or ointment, which will trap moisture," Dr. Garshick says. Your dermatologist might recommend an anti-inflammatory cream to combat itching and irritation. Avoiding triggers helps too: Harsh soaps, fragrances, and scratchy fabrics are common culprits.

PSORIASIS

▶ WHAT IT IS:

A chronic autoimmune disease that causes a buildup of skin cells, leading to rough, red, scaly patches of skin. "In psoriasis, skin cells turn over in three to four days compared with normal skin cells, which typically turn over in four weeks," explains Hubert Chodkiewicz, M.D., a board-certified dermatologist in Austin.

▶ WHY IT HAPPENS:

Experts think psoriasis stems from an overactive immune system, which promotes inflammation. This causes skin cells to reproduce faster, before old ones have been shed. The buildup leads to patches of rough skin, or plaques.

▶ WHAT TO

WATCH FOR: Thick, red, scaly skin patches with silvery streaks, usually on the elbows, knees, scalp, torso, or palms or the soles of the feet. The patches often itch and may bleed when scratched, says Dr. Chodkiewicz. Some people with psoriasis also have thick or pitted nails.

▶ HOW TO DEAL:

There's no cure, but topical creams, injectable meds (like biologics), and light therapy can soothe symptoms. Regular moisturizing also helps. Try to avoid triggers like stress, infections, dry skin, cold weather, certain meds (like lithium

and prednisone), skin injuries or sunburn, smoking, and alcohol.

SKIN CANCER

One in five Americans will get skin cancer, which typically stems from years of UV damage. "Most sun damage is done in our youth, and its consequences are not seen until later in adulthood, even with better sun protection as an adult," says Dr. Chodkiewicz.

▶ WHAT TO

WATCH FOR: Monthly self-checks can help you spot suspicious moles or growths, Dr. Chodkiewicz says. Use mirrors to examine hard-to-see areas. "Anything that is growing, changing, crusting, or not healing needs to be seen by a dermatologist," he adds. If you find something new or unusual, take a zoomed-in picture with your phone so you can track changes over time and also call your doctor.



▶ REDUCE YOUR

RISK: You can't undo past sunburns or sessions in the tanning bed. But you can protect your skin from future damage: Wear sunscreen daily, and seek shade between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

ROSACEA

▶ WHAT IT IS:

Rosacea is a chronic inflammatory skin condition that causes red or

response to certain bacteria or mites that live near the hair follicles, irritating the skin," says board-certified dermatologist Nianda Reid, M.D.

▶ WHAT TO

WATCH FOR: Red or pink patches on the cheeks, nose, chin, and forehead that may feel warm or tingly. Red, inflamed bumps that burn or sting are also common, Dr. Reid notes. Your symptoms will likely come and go, often flaring up when triggered by things like sun exposure, hot weather, stress, alcohol, and spicy foods. Rosacea can make your eyes feel red, itchy, sore, or watery too.

▶ HOW TO DEAL:

Choose gentle skincare products, as rosacea-prone skin tends to be sensitive. Prescription ointments and gels can also help calm flares, and if your symptoms are more severe your doctor might recommend oral medications or laser therapy.

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