



When outside temperatures drop and inside temperatures rise, our skin bears the brunt of the tug-of-war. Heavier clothing, low humidity from heaters and fireplaces, and the tendency toward long, hot showers rob skin of essential moisture, leaving our skin feeling dry, itchy and irritated ...

by Dr. Fiona Wright

SSKIN IS COMPRISED OF many layers. The outer layer or epidermis is the first and hardest hit by harsh environmental elements, as its job is to protect the dermal layer that lies below. The epidermis is constantly peeling and sloughing and it's this process—more prevalent in winter months—that makes our skin look dry, dull and flaky. Our skin is a direct reflection of our environment. We can't keep "Old Man Winter" from coming around, but we can keep from looking like him!

- Bathe or shower in warm, not hot water, which strips natural oils from skin.
- Use mild cleansers and soaps, avoiding the more drying deodorant soaps.
- Apply moisturizer immediately after your shower while skin is still warm and slightly damp. Use heavier creams or body butters instead of summer-weight moisturizers.
- Use shaving lotion or hair conditioner instead of traditional shaving foam.
- Good ole Vaseline over your most vulnerable areas—elbows, knees, and feet—will help seal in moisture and heal dry skin.
- Use hand cream generously and often. And don't forget your feet! Slather on rich cream at bedtime and cover with cotton socks. Your feet will be warm *and* soft!
- Consider purchasing a humidifier for your home to help combat the effects of central heat and fireplaces.

Many of these tips are tried-and-true and common sensical in their approach. With daily media reports of new research and exciting ingredients promising visible results, the latest information and technology to combat the dry-skin days of winter lead us right to our cupboard ... well, sort of!

There is no question that the science of skin care is improving. Scientists are continuously finding and developing ingredients to soothe and smooth dull, dry skin. One such ingredient may already be in your pantry! *Avenanthramides* is a substance found in oats that we have long benefited from to aid in skin irritations. One popular brand utilizing *avenanthramides* is the Aveeno product line. Today's spotlight, however, is on yet another ingredient found in oats—*Beta-Glucan*.

New research has shown that the same oatmeal that relieves itchy, dry skin can also keep your complexion firm, moisturized and youthful. *ALLURE* magazine recently posted an exciting study from the *International Journal of Cosmetic Science*. It showed that Beta-Glucan can improve fine lines and wrinkles, elasticity, smoothness and firmness by 10 to 15 percent, while boosting moisture by 20 percent. Found in the bran part of the oat, it stimulates the renewal of skin cells and is even used by surgeons and physicians worldwide to treat burn victims. The same powerful antioxidant can also boost collagen production and help improve sagging skin. Beta-Glucan is a potent moisturizer that can keep the skin more hydrated than even the popular hyaluronic acid, which until now was viewed as one of the most effective moisturizing ingredients available.

Beta-Glucan is gaining media coverage and notoriety, yet is currently found in great concentration only in the highest quality, most potent antiaging skin care lines such as RENEW, from Fiona Wright M.D. Cosmeceuticals. Other manufacturers, such as DermaFex™ and Beauty Naturally® are also incorporating this exciting new ingredient into their over-the-counter lines.

Oatmeal—old-fashioned meets breakthrough science with this bright "new" star in the recipe for anti-aging. +