



SKIN INSTITUTE

Dry Skin Information Sheet

Dry skin is a common problem. Dermatologists often call dry skin 'xerosis' or 'asteatosis'. These dry areas may also result in Dermatitis, ie. the skin becomes red and itchy.

This may result in a 'crazy-paving' appearance on the lower legs (eczema craquelé), or round patches scattered over the trunk and limbs (a dry form of nummular Dermatitis). Sometimes the dry skin is just itchy, without much of a rash (sometimes known as 'winter itch', '7th age itch', or senile pruritus).

Factors that contribute to dry skin include:

- Inherited factors.
- Metabolic factors (dry skin is more common in those with an under active thyroid, or with excessive weight loss).
- Increasing age (resulting in decreased natural lubrication).
- Cool weather with low humidity.
- Air conditioning, central heating or being close to a fire or fan heater.
- Excessive bathing, showering or swimming (especially in strongly chlorinated water).
- Contact with soap, detergents and solvents.
- Frictional irritation and chapping.

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