

# Skin

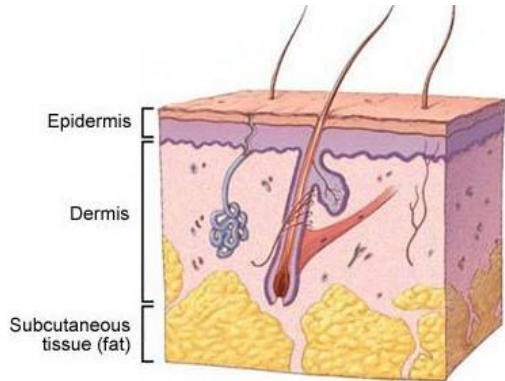
Skin is the largest and outermost part of the body, and protects it from external disease-causing elements as well as environmental changes. It consists of three layers:

## Epidermis

This is the outermost layer of the skin made of cells called keratinocytes, which are stacked on top of each other, forming different sub-layers. The keratinocytes develop at the bottom and rise to the surface, where they are shed as dead, hard and flattened cells. In this way, the epidermis constantly renews itself. Other important cells found in the epidermis are Melanocytes and Langerhans.

## Dermis

The dermis consists of connective tissues and is much thicker than the epidermis. It is responsible for the skin's pliability and mechanical resistance, besides regulating the body temperature. The dermis supplies the avascular epidermis with nutrients through its vascular network. It contains sense organs for touch, pressure, pain and temperature, as well as blood vessels, nerve fibres, sebaceous and sweat glands, and hair follicles.



## Subcutaneous layer

The subcutaneous layer, below the dermis, consists of loose connective tissue and fat. It acts as a protective cushion and insulates the body by monitoring heat gain and loss.

## Function

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The skin performs the following functions –

**Protection:** The skin is an anatomical barrier between the internal and external environment, protects us from pathogens and prevents

damage to the body.

**Sensation:** The skin transmits information to the brain about the surroundings through nerve endings that react to heat and cold, touch, pressure, vibration and tissue injury.

**Thermoregulation:** The Eccrine (sweat) glands and dilated blood vessels aid heat loss, while constricted vessels greatly reduce cutaneous blood flow and conserve heat.

**Control of evaporation:** The skin provides a relatively dry and semi-impermeable barrier to reduce fluid loss.

**Storage and synthesis:** It acts as a storage center for lipids and water, and helps in the synthesis of vitamin D.

**Absorption:** Oxygen, nitrogen and carbon dioxide can diffuse into the epidermis in small amounts; some animals use their skin as their sole respiratory organ.

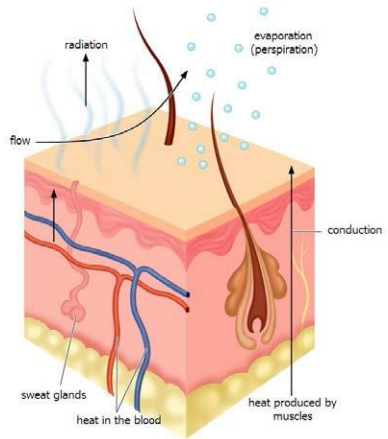
**Water resistance:** The skin acts as a water resistant barrier, so essential nutrients aren't washed out of the body. The nutrients and oils that hydrate the skin are covered by the epidermis, with help from the sebaceous glands that releases sebum, an oily liquid.

**Immunity:** The skin plays an important role in the immune system by protecting the body from disease-causing pathogens.

**Excretion:** The skin removes certain types of waste materials from the body.

## Problems

The face and other areas of the body skin can suffer because of age, exposure to toxins and a host of other factors. Also, certain skin flaws are the result of genetics, viruses and other causes. Some common skin problems include:

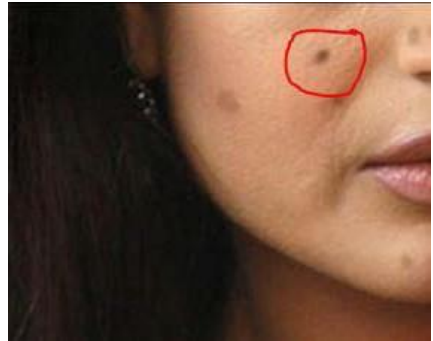


## Acne

One of the most common facial skin problems in adolescents is acne. As the sebaceous glands present in the dermis become overactive and produce excess oil, follicles become plugged, resulting in blackheads and whiteheads. These plugged follicles can also become inflamed, cause pimples, nodules and cysts.

## Age spots

Age spots are brownish patches on the skin that appear as a person ages, or due to sun damage, or genetics. Sometimes known as liver spots, these benign patches resemble large freckles and usually appear on the face, neck, hands, feet or legs.



## Moles

Moles are raised, round, usually dark-brown spots on the skin that may be present at birth or develop over time. Most moles are harmless, but they may pose some cosmetic skin problems.

## Warts

Warts are benign growths caused by a virus. Although warts are generally raised, rough and skin-coloured, they can manifest in many forms and hues. Warts can appear almost anywhere on the body, and can be an unsightly and sometimes painful.



## Dry skin

Exposure to harmful detergents, chemical-based soaps, frequent cleaning of hands and face, ointments, drugs, powder, perfumes and cold air in the winter can aggravate dry skin. Prolonged diseases,

such as kidney and liver problems also cause dry skin. Excess bathing is the main cause of dry skin as the protective natural oil gets destroyed. Water deficiency also causes dry or dehydrated skin.

### **Eczema**

Eczema is a term for a group of medical conditions that cause the skin to become inflamed or irritated. The most common type of eczema is known as atopic dermatitis or atopic eczema. Atopic refers to a group of diseases that may cause other



allergic conditions, such as asthma and hay fever. Eczema affects nearly 6% infants, and 3% adults and children.

### **Seborrheic dermatitis**

Seborrheic dermatitis causes oily, waxy patches on the scalp. It is distinct from other forms of dermatitis and can affect babies, typically during the first six months of their life, in the form of 'cradle cap' - a flaky, dandruff-like condition on the scalp. After the symptoms clear up, it rarely appears again until puberty.

### **Skin cancer**

Basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma are the most common types of skin cancer. But, 75% of skin cancer deaths are due to melanoma, the third most common form.



### **Psoriasis**

Psoriasis is a chronic auto-immune and disfiguring genetic disease. It is a build-up of excess skin tissue that is red in colour, thick and covered with silvery scales. It first appears on the elbows and knees, but can

spread to other parts of the limbs and even the trunk.

## **Sun damage**

Long exposure to the sun is the single biggest factor contributing to visible signs of aging and other facial skin problems. Sun damage can lead to uneven pigmentation, deep wrinkles, leathery skin and skin cancer.

## **Under-eye circles**

Darkened skin beneath the eyes is a common skin problem caused by factors, such as heredity, lack of sleep, allergies, diet and sun exposure.

## **Wrinkles**

Lines and wrinkles appear where skin naturally folds and creases, becoming more permanent with age. Sun exposure, smoking and extreme dieting can hasten this effect, making skin look older than it is.



## **Causes**

The main causes of skin problems are -Auto-immune disorders

- Heredity and ageing
- Sun exposure
- Smoking
- Lack of facial or skin hygiene
- Overuse of cosmetics and toiletries

## **Symptoms**

Anything that irritates or clogs the skin can cause symptoms, such as redness, swelling and itchy skin. Rashes and hives are other signs of skin conditions. Some are quick and easy to treat, while others are chronic or more difficult to get rid of.

# Skin Cleanse

Nowadays, external cleansing of the skin is a routine chore for people. However, less than 200 years ago, soap was a luxury and people bathed infrequently. In fact, frequent washing is now the number one cause of dermatological diseases. However, the benefits of washing ourselves far outweigh the drawbacks. Regular bathing and hygienic skin care regimens have virtually eradicated problems of parasites, such as lice, prevented diseases, increased our average lifespan and generally improved our standard of living. Apart from regular bathing, some other external good exfoliating cleansing methods can be easily practised for a healthy skin.

## Skin cleanses (external)

Try any one cleanse or more, as per your convenience –

### Papaya (*Papita*) paste

#### Ingredients

Half a papaya of a medium size

An avocado A banana

#### Procedure

Use avocado, banana and papaya to make a paste and apply it on your face. Let it dry for 15 minutes. Then, wash

your face using warm water. This paste is very useful in hydrating dry skin and clearing scars.



### Egg yolk paste

#### Ingredients

An egg One to two teaspoons of milk powder One teaspoon of honey

#### Procedure

Make a paste using egg yolk, milk powder and honey, and apply it on the face, neck and other dry areas of the skin. Let it dry for 10-15 minutes. Wash your face using cold water.



## **Cucumber (*Kheera*)**

### **Ingredients**

One large cucumber

### **Procedure**

Apply the cucumber paste on your face and other dry skin areas. This moisturises skin, and makes it supple and soft.



## **Honey (*Shahad*)**

### **Ingredients**

Honey - 10gm

Rose water -

20ml **Procedure**

Mix honey with rose water and apply it on your face, neck and other dry skin areas. This mixture cleanses



and tones the skin, and keeps it glowing.

## **Almond (*Badaam*)**

### **Ingredients**

Almond oil - 10ml

### **Procedure**

Massage your face using almond oil. It nourishes the skin, protects it from wrinkles and other age related skin issues.

## **Lemon**

### **Ingredients**

Lime juice - 5 to 10ml, Avocado - 10 - 15ml

### **Procedure**

Mix a teaspoon of lime juice with one teaspoon of avocado and apply it on your face. Let it dry for 10-20 minutes. This will clean the skin, and make it soft, radiant





and glowing.

## **Apple**

### **Ingredients**

Fresh apple – Two large sized or three medium sized

### **Procedure**

Grate the apples and apply the paste on your skin. Keep it for 20 minutes and wash off using cold water. An apple face pack nourishes the skin, makes it glow and removes dryness.



### **Skin Cleanse (Internal)**

If the Liver and Kidney Cleanses are carried out along with the above mentioned external cleanses, the results will be miraculous. However, to get even better results, the following may be practiced along with Liver and Kidney Cleanses -

1. Drink green vegetable juices to cleanse, nourish and tone skin tissue. Make juice using a cucumber with its skin intact, a bunch of fresh parsley, 100gms alfalfa sprouts and four sprigs of fresh mint.
2. Mud Therapy is an ancient healing procedure where the skin is covered in mud for a short or long duration. The mud causes sweating, thereby slimming and toning the body, hydrating and firming the skin, and relaxing the muscles by flushing out toxins from the body. A layer of mud is applied to the skin and then washed using warm water. (For details Chapter 2, Kidney Cleanse, of Cleansing Therapy - Cure Yourself Vol.-1).
3. Lepanam is a procedure by which medicated paste (made of turmeric or sandalwood) is applied either locally or all over the body based on the patient's condition. It can be used in a variety of conditions, especially skin disorders, pain



management and improving skin complexion. Once the paste has dried, it should be removed. The thickness of the paste depends on the patient's problem. It should be avoided if the person has sensitive skin.

### **Dos and Don'ts**

- Strong soaps and detergents can strip oil from your skin.  
Use mild cleansers.
- Uncontrolled stress can make your skin sensitive, trigger acne breakouts and other skin problems. To encourage healthy skin and a healthy state of mind, take steps to manage your stress. Set reasonable limits, scale back your to-do list and make time to do the things you enjoy.
- To protect and lubricate your skin, apply a shaving cream, lotion or gel before shaving. For a close shave, use a clean, sharp razor. Shave in the direction the hair grows, not against it. To cleanse genital hair, follow the guidance provided in Hair Cleanse on page ...



### **Benefits**

As they say, your skin reflects your health. The above methods will help you achieve radiant, glowing skin, which will reflect your inner health and attract others to you. Note: The other cleanses explained in my book 'Cleansing Therapy: Cure Yourself', such as Liver Cleanse, Kidney Cleanse and Acidity Cleanse will also improve the health of your skin.

A Liver Cleanse always improves skin.