



The Wellness Family

Drs. Sandheinrich Keep You Informed

Wellness and Your Skin

Many aren't aware that the largest organ in the human body is actually the skin. Accounting for 16% of total body weight and covering up to 22 square feet of surface area, the skin is more than just a "covering" as was originally thought.

A complex system made up of nerves, glands and cell layers, the skin plays an intricate role in overall health. The skin is so important, in fact, that the abrasion experienced by the skin during its passage through the birth canal during a vaginal delivery is what stimulates the action of a newborn's breathing.

Skin is Important

Far beyond being the bag that holds the body together, skin is a protective barrier that serves as a buffer to guard against extreme temperatures, chemicals, bacteria and more. It also serves as a warning system, comprised of sensitive nerves that send signals to the brain with messages from pleasure to pain.

It was once thought that the skin was completely inert and impermeable to chemicals; however, the truth is quite the opposite. The skin is incredibly absorbent and is not particular in regards to occupational, environmental or consumer chemicals. If it is slathered on the body, the skin will absorb it.

Skin Absorption

The human skin will intentionally and unintentionally come in contact with chemicals on a constant basis. To be absorbed, a chemical will pass through the epidermis, glands or hair follicles in the skin. Sweat glands and hair follicles make up, at most, just 1% of the total skin surface. So, while some chemicals may be absorbed in this way, the majority will be absorbed through the epidermis. Once passing quickly through the 7 layers of the epidermis, toxins then enter the dermis where they can enter the blood stream or lymph to circulate to other areas of the body.

Products to Consider

It may be a little over-whelming but it's important to consider how the human skin is "unintentionally" coming in contact with chemicals. The following are "personal care" products that may contain toxic chemicals: bar soap and body wash; facial cleanser; hand sanitizer; makeup remover or face masks; acne treatments; anti-fungal or anti-itch creams;

foot odor control; skin treatments for eczema, psoriasis, skin fading, scars, varicose veins, wounds and sunburns; anti-aging creams; body firming lotions; hand creams; moisturizers and antiperspirants or deodorants. Sadly, the majority of these products purchased in the average shopping center will contain at least one toxic chemical and some cases as many as a dozen or more.

When shopping take the time to understand and avoid chemical ingredients. Chemicals such as oxybenzone (benzophenone-3), benzoyl peroxide, DEA (Diethanolamine), MEA (Monoethanolamine) and TEA (Triethanolamine), Dioxin, Parabens (Methyl, Butyl, Ethyl, Propyl), PEG (Polyethylene glycol), Butylene Glycol, Sodium Lauryl Sulfate, Sodium Laureth Sulfate, Triclosan, 4-Methylbenzylidene camphor, Tinosorb M and S, Uvasorb HEB and Isopenteny-4-methoxycinnamate, just to name a few, are prevalent in cosmetics and other skin care products.



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Naturally Repairing the Skin

Any damage to the skin should be carefully treated to avoid infections and the possibility that other bacteria or damaging chemicals can quickly get past nature's barrier. However, it's important not to automatically reach for a tube of antibiotic ointment or other skin treatment. Consider instead natural, organic options.

Aloe Vera is hands-down the first defense when treating skin abrasions, burns or other skin damage. It will naturally moisturize and help the skin repair itself. Apple Cider Vinegar is another excellent natural treatment remedy for certain skin conditions: applying a compress can help reduce swelling in the face, hands and feet; soaking the feet in 1 cup of apple cider vinegar and water or applying the apple cider vinegar directly to the affected area can treat skin fungus or yeast (including athlete's foot); or mix equal parts apple cider

vinegar and bentonite clay with 1 tablespoon raw honey and apply to the skin for 10-15 minutes before rinsing off with warm water for a natural, healthy facial mask. Finally, for a natural moisturizer coconut oil can be applied directly to the skin to help relieve dry patches or itchy skin during winter months (known as winter itch).

If you must purchase a skin care product, then be sure to look for the following labeling: the NPA seal is from the Natural Products Association and means that 95% of the product is natural, excluding water, and the remaining 5% of ingredients cannot be suspected of any health risk as verified by peer-reviewed third-party scientific papers; USDA Organic designates that 95% of the ingredients are organic (meaning grown without pesticides) and the remaining 5% are non-organic ingredients on a list of approved substances sanctioned by the National Organic Program enforced by the USDA; and ECOCERT is a similar certification devised by an independent European-based group requiring a minimum of 95% of ingredients come from natural origins. These are just a few examples of seals that can be found on products to prove they are toxin-free.

Protecting the Skin Naturally

To be preventative with your skin, consider beginning with a healthy diet. Dry skin can sometimes be a sign of an Omega-3 deficiency, so be sure to increase your intake of walnuts, salmon, shrimp and Brussels sprouts. Fresh vegetables, especially leafy green, organic and locally grown, can improve your skin by providing it with important vitamins and minerals from the inside. Fermented vegetables, such as sauerkraut, pickles, tempeh and kimchi, can actually help regulate your gut microflora which has been shown to help prevent skin irritations. The potent antioxidant, astaxanthin, acts as an internal sunscreen and develops a healthy color cast to the skin and can be found in salmon, red trout, lobster, shrimp, crawfish, crab and salmon roe.

As for what not to eat, it's important to avoid sugars, fructose, grains and processed foods. Eliminating these items can cause a rapid improvement in the complexion because these foods have a detrimental impact on the skin.

Human Touch Matters

Skin-to-skin contact between a mother and infant has been confirmed to ensure healthy childhood development. A recent study by the UMEA University in Sweden has shown that simply touching the skin of an adult can have a positive effect. Results showed that touch massage reduced the stress response as indicated by decreased heart rate and decreased activity in the sympathetic nervous system, and a significant decrease in cortisol and insulin levels. Anxiety levels significantly decreased in a patient group that received touch massage as compared to the control group.

The studies concluded that massaging the skin activates a brain area involved in sending rewarding pleasant stimulations which decreases anxiety and dampens the stress response.

The Chiropractic Factor

As with all of the body's systems, the skin is regulated by the central nervous system. As such, Vertebral Subluxations that interfere with that nervous system can negatively affect this operation. This is why many parents report back that their child's psoriasis and eczema symptoms have been reduced by regular chiropractic care.

The proper function of the skin is maintained by the proper function of the entire body and this is positively affected by a healthy diet, exercise and regular chiropractic adjustments.

Dear Patient,
Drs. Sandheinrich are dedicated to providing you with the absolute best in family wellness care. So take a moment today to discuss with your Family Wellness Chiropractor any concerns you may have regarding your family's overall health and wellness.

This newsletter is provided to you by:

1st Step Family Wellness
Dr. Jeanne and Dr. Ryan Sandheinrich
439 South Kirkwood Road; Suite 214
St. Louis, MO 63122
314.805.7837