

# 10 Things *About...*

## Protecting Winter Skin

by Michael Q. Pugliese, L.E.

**H**eat flows from warm to cold objects. As environmental temperature drops, heat is lost from the body. We respond in two ways to a drop in temperature; the first is peripheral vasoconstriction, and the second is an increase in metabolism in an effort to generate more heat. Almost all of the skin's problems associated with the cold can be derived from these two facts. Cold skin is poorly-functioning skin characterized by dryness, itching, and sub-acute inflammation, all resulting from a greater loss of water. Categorically, you can say that when skin is cold, it shifts into low gear and its ability to function is greatly compromised. Here are 10 suggestions to tell clients to help them survive the winter and protect skin from damage.



# 1

Use sun protection of at least SPF 30. Remember, the sun's rays do not go away in the wintertime. While it is not as intense, sunlight still has a lot of UVA and UVB energy. If the skin is exposed, it is vulnerable to ultraviolet damage.

# 2

Make a friend of moisturizers. A cold environment is usually a dry environment. Cool air loses its ability to hold water. As a result, transepidermal water loss goes up, causing the skin to become dry. Heavier moisturizers are generally required to protect the skin from water loss. Dry skin is usually flaky. If the dryness is severe, the skin will crack, making it a very poor barrier for controlling things going in and out of the skin. When you scratch itchy, dry skin, you are compounding the problem. Look for products that contain high water-retaining ingredients such as jojoba, argan, palm, and rice bran oils.

# 3

Drink an adequate supply of water. Remember, normally you can lose as much as 500 milliliters of transepidermal water a day. That is equivalent to one pint of water. Try to drink two to four ounces of water every couple of hours throughout the day.

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**4** Your diet is critical. Make sure you have an adequate amount of essential fatty acids, as they are vital in helping maintain the moisture barrier. Fats are metabolized by the body to generate heat. One gram of fat will produce nine calories of heat, as opposed to protein and carbohydrate, which produce only four calories per gram. You need not gain weight, but be sure to add good sources of essential fatty acids (EFAs) – salmon, avocado, and almonds are great sources.



**5** Dry, cold skin is the playground of free radicals. Make sure you continue to use antioxidants during the winter, as well as during the summer. Using products with vitamin C and vitamin E and taking these as oral supplements will enhance resistance to free radical damage.

**6** Rather than wearing a single, heavy garment, dress in layers. Remember that heat is lost from the body by conduction, convection, and radiation. While it may seem like a contradiction, if you sweat in the presence of cold temperatures, mainly due to being overly dressed, you will markedly change your heat loss for the worse. Also keep your head covered to retain heat.

**7** While long, hot showers may be comforting, they are also quite injurious to winter-damaged skin. Avoid prolonged exposure to hot water, which, combined with aggressive soaps, can really tear up the skin barrier. Keep it short and set the water temperature only as hot as you need it to be.





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**8** Do not forget to protect your lips, as they lose water much faster than your cornified skin. Carry balm that is a combination of sunscreen and emollients and apply it often throughout the day.

**9** Check the humidity of your home and workplace. If it falls below 60 percent, your skin will tend to lose more moisture. Keep in mind the body is 70 percent water and that water will always go from a higher level to a lower level. If the average American home is comfortably warm temperature-wise, it may be too dry when it comes to humidity level. This is not an insignificant cause of many upper respiratory problems. A humidifier can help.

**10** Finally, be aware of the wind chill factor. Frigid air can carry away heat and moisture rapidly from the skin and create an area of damage that can be quite severe. Windy days are extremely damaging to skin. Wear a scarf to cover your face and neck on particularly blustery days.



Look for the signs of cold-damaged skin: It is usually cool to the touch, dry, and flaky, but it can also be characterized by redness, which is a sign of an inflammatory reaction. Consider also that cold-compromised skin is ill-equipped to combat infections, so it is important to give these areas your particular attention. Pay attention to your client's skin care routine and advise your clients to do the same.



*Michael Q. Pugliese, B.S., L.E. became the third-generation CEO of Circadia by Dr. Pugliese, Inc. in 2006. Under his leadership, the Circadia brand has grown to achieve international recognition and distribution. Pugliese is a licensed aesthetician and a member of the Society of Cosmetic Chemists. He regularly attends their education events to stay on the cutting edge of new product development. His compelling original lectures honor the tenets of modern skin science discovered by his grandfather and add today's application of that information in an ever-changing business and scientific environment.*

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