



## Managing Dry/Itchy Skin

It is important to recognize and practice the basic principles of good daily skin care. Dermatographism is a chronic problem and you will probably always have dry, sensitive, easily irritated skin. Hydration is the key to therapy.

Take at least one bath or shower per day using warm, not hot, water for at least 15-20 minutes. Except for the genital and auxiliary areas, washcloths should not be used due to their abrasiveness.

- Use only a gentle cleansing bar or wash such as Dove, Oil of Olay, Basis, Eucerin, Cetaphil, Oilatum, Neutrogena, Purpose, Aveeno or Moisturel. During a severe flare-up, you may choose to use cleansers just in areas where they are needed.
- Gently pat away excess water and immediately apply moisturizer or the special skin medications prescribed for you onto your damp skin. This will seal in the water and make the skin less dry and itchy. Do not apply a moisturizer OVER the top of a topical steroid.
- Apply a good moisturizer such as Aquaphor, Aquaphilic Ointment, Eucerin Cream, Vanicream, Moisturel Cream or Lotion, Cetaphil Cream or Lotion, Elta, Nutraderm or Neutrogena. Apply the moisturizer throughout the day whenever the skin feels dry or itchy. Do not use lotions or creams with perfume or preservatives in them, as they will only dry the skin further.

### Reduce Skin Irritation

It is often said that dermatographism is “the itch that becomes a hive”!

- Wash all new clothes before wearing to remove formaldehyde and other chemicals.
- Residual laundry detergent in clothing may be irritating. While changing to a milder detergent may help, more often adding a second rinse cycle, to ensure removal of soap, is better.
- Wear garments which allow air to pass freely to your skin. Open weave, loose fitting, cotton blend clothing may be more comfortable.
- Work and sleep in comfortable surroundings with a fairly constant temperature and humidity level.
- Keep fingernails very short and smooth to help prevent damage due to scratching. Don't scratch!
- Appropriate use of antihistamines may reduce itching to some degree. Not itching or scratching is the most important factor in controlling dermatographism.
- Use sunscreen on a regular basis and try never to get sunburned. Avoid tanning booths.
- Residual chlorine or bromine on the skin after swimming in a pool may be irritating. Immediately after swimming, take a shower or bath, washing with a mild soap from head to toe and then apply an appropriate moisturizer.