

CARING FOR AGING SKIN



Our skin is the main thing other people see and is the first thing that most people are concerned about displaying signs of aging.

As our skin ages, it becomes thinner, which can add to the appearance of wrinkles. We lose fat, elasticity, and moisture. Scratches and bumps often take longer to heal and are more visible. Depending on the sun exposure we've subjected our skin to throughout our lives, we may see more ragged dryness, age spots, even cancer. The routine that we might have used when we were younger is no longer applicable.



Some easy changes to make to your overall skin cleansing routine include:

- Switch from bar soap to a creamy, fragrance-free cleanser or emollient.
- Use warm, not hot, water.
- Change to a soft cloth rather than a brush or buff puff to clean skin.
- Shorten bath or shower time to 10 minutes.
- Pat rather than rub when toweling off – even leave a bit of water on the skin.
- Apply a creamy, fragrance-free hydrolyzing moisturizer for dry skin to moist skin immediately after bathing (then reapply as needed throughout the day).



Other skin-healthy choices to make for aging skin include:

- Protect skin from the sun with a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher.
- Choose fragrance-free skin care and laundry products.
- Drink more water to stay hydrated.
- Consider purchasing a humidifier to keep indoor humidity between 45% and 60%. Measure indoor humidity with a hygrometer that you can easily find at a local hardware or home improvement store.
- See a dermatologist for skin cancer exams. After age 50, the risk of developing skin cancer and pre-cancerous growths increases.



Foods for Your Skin

Here are some skin-healthy foods and how they can help:

- **Watercress** – Internal antiseptic properties with high levels of vitamin A and C
- **Red Bell Peppers** – Good for collagen production; antioxidant properties that can protect skin from sun damage, pollution, and environmental toxins
- **Papayas** – Improve skin elasticity and shed dead skin cells
- **Blueberries** – Protect skin from damage due to sun, stress, and pollution
- **Spinach** – Hydrates and keeps skin firm and smooth
- **Nuts** (especially almonds) – Repair skin tissue, retain moisture, and protect from UV rays
- **Avocados** – Shed dead cells and protect from toxins and UV rays
- **Sweet Potatoes** – Restore skin elasticity and rejuvenate skin cells

Source: [Healthline](#)

Source: [American Academy of Dermatology](#) and [National Institute on Aging](#)



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Skin Cancer

Unfortunately, skin cancer is all too common in the United States. The main cause of skin cancer is unprotected exposure to sun, sunlamps, and tanning booths. Even unprotected time in the sun many years prior can show up as cancer later in life. Anyone of any skin color can get skin cancer, but those with fair skin and freckles are at greatest risk.

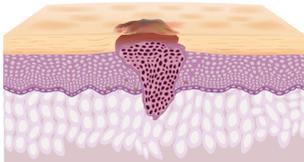


There are three primary types of skin cancer.

Basal Cell Carcinoma

This type accounts for more than 90% of skin cancer in the United States and is the most common of all cancers. It is slow growing and rarely spreads to any other part of the body. It's usually found on the parts of skin most exposed to the sun (head, face, neck, hands, arms).

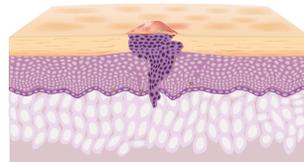
- Pearly or waxy appearance
- Sunken center
- Irregular blood vessels on surface
- Tendency to bleed easily after injury



Squamous Cell Carcinoma

This type also grows slowly and occasionally spreads elsewhere in the body. It's also usually found on the parts of skin most exposed to the sun but can be seen in other parts of the body as well.

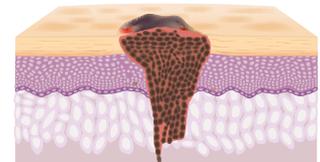
- Raised, dull-red skin lesion
- Thick-crust scale
- May have an ulcerated appearance



Melanoma

This is the most dangerous type of skin cancer. It isn't as common as the other types but can grow more quickly and spread to other organs. It can be deadly if not caught quickly.

- Asymmetric, where one half looks different than the other
- Often has irregular borders
- Color changes or more than one color
- Diameter is greater than the size of a pencil eraser
- Changes in size, shape, tenderness, bleeding, or shade may evolve



It is important to see your doctor as soon as possible if you have concerns about any skin imperfections.

Source: [National Institute on Aging](#) and [University of California San Francisco](#) and [Cancer Treatment Centers of America](#)

Common Skin Changes

As we age, here are a few things we might notice about our skin. Most are normal and not usually cause for alarm:

- Drier
- Thinner and paper-like
- Itchy
- More age spots, wrinkles and creases
- Blotchier
- More easily irritated
- More susceptible to skin infections
- Bruises more easily
- Sweats less
- Heals more slowly



Source: [American Academy of Dermatology](#)