

Save your skin from the ravages of cold weather

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(HealthDay)—Winter can be hard on your skin, but you can take steps to keep it soft and supple, dermatologists say.

"When the weather changes, your [skin care products](#) should, too. For most of us, dry [skin](#) makes an appearance in the winter due to changes in temperature and humidity, so you need to think about appropriate skin care formulations," said Dr. Rajani Katta. She's a clinical professor of dermatology with the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston.

Katta and her colleague, Dr. Megan Rogge, an assistant professor of dermatology at the university, offered these tips to protect your skin:

- **Choose thick skin creams over watery lotions.** "Lotions are the least moisturizing, because they have such a high quantity of water. Creams are a better choice for those with dry skin," Katta said in a university news release.

- **Use sunblock.** Rogge explained that "even when the temperature drops, the sun's rays can still emit powerful ultraviolet radiation. If you're close to snow or water, those UV rays can be even more potent due to the reflective surfaces, which makes wearing protection paramount."
- **Don't take long, hot showers.** "Many of us love to linger longer in steaming hot showers, particularly when it's cold outside. These feel great, especially when your skin is itchy," Rogge added. "But this can actually damage your skin barrier, and also exacerbate dry, itchy skin. That's why it's recommended to limit showers to 10 minutes, and use lukewarm water instead of hot water."
- **Soak and smear to help lock moisture into your skin.** Katta said, "After soaking your skin, you want to smear on your moisturizer. In other words, after you take a shower, you'll step out of the shower, pat dry just a little bit, then apply a moisturizer while your skin is still damp."
- **Wear gloves.** "An important part of looking after your skin is using the right protective gear," Katta noted. "Gloves keep your fingers warm and protect them, too."
- **Use a humidifier in your home.** According to Rogge, "Winter [dry skin](#) gets worse once you start turning on the heat in your home. That heat starts to dry the air in your home, which in turn starts to dry your skin. A humidifier in your bedroom when you sleep can really help."

More information: The U.S. National Institutes of Health has more on [keeping your skin healthy](#).

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