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FACING FALL

The changing of the season can have a harsh effect on our complexions. Here's how to keep skin supple year-round.

BY LARA HYDE



Fall is easily the most beautiful season. From the gorgeous colours and refreshing crisp air to Pick-Your-Own apple farms and haunted hayrides, fall has it all. But let's face it (pun very much intended), as we make the transition from summer to winter, the changes in temperature and humidity levels can have an effect on our skin that isn't always pretty.

"As we move into fall, the drier air makes us more prone to skin dryness, dullness, and itchy skin or eczema," says Dr. Benjamin Barankin, a Toronto dermatologist and medical director of the Toronto Dermatology Centre (www.torontodermatologycentre.com).

MOISTURE MANTRA

The solution to combatting fall's dryness lies in using the right moisturizer. While a light moisturizing lotion is ideal for summer skin, "You will want to switch over to using a cream in the fall and winter," says Dr. Barankin.

"If you have a history of dry skin or eczema, using a moisturizing cream year-round is fine, too," he adds. Moisturizers that contain ingredients such as dimethicone, glycerin, urea and ceramides are ideal for combatting dry, itchy skin.

FOR ACNE-PRONE SKIN

When it comes to keeping our skin clear, some people worry about heavy moisturizers clogging pores and causing breakouts. But the fact of the matter is that using harsh products that dry one's skin out excessively can actually make acne worse. According to the Acne Resource Centre (www.acne-resource.org), fall/winter is the worst time for acne outbreaks in people with dry skin. A daily routine of adding moisture will help offset this problem. People with acne-prone skin should look for moisturizers that are hypoallergenic and non-comedogenic, meaning they won't clog pores.

Many people steer clear of oil in their moisturizer's ingredients, believing that putting oil on your skin is a one-way ticket to Zit City. But there are oils that are non-comedogenic and don't tend to clog pores, including Argan oil and hemp seed oil, which can be applied directly to the face in

their pure form and have many cosmetic benefits. Glycerin, while not typically used as a stand-alone moisturizer, is also non-comedogenic.

DROP THE SOAP


As far as keeping one's skin clean, "Soap is fine to use in the summer," says Dr. Barankin, "but in the fall and winter, we recommend using a cleanser for the face, and, less importantly, for the body." For families prone to dry skin and eczema, Dr. Barankin suggests considering investing in a water-softening system for the home. He also recommends using a humidifier from October to April to add moisture to the air inside your house and make your skin happier.

PROTECT YOUR SKIN

Finally, while sun protection is not as critical as in the summer when the sun is more intense and sunburns are more common, sun protection is still important. Using a daily moisturizer that contains sunscreen is a simple way to ensure your skin is protected year-round. ■



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