Skin Care Basics

Skin is the body's largest organ and provides a living barrier between our body systems and the environment. Since we "wear" our skin every day, it's easy to take it for granted. But good skin care makes a big difference in the way we look and feel and can even affect our overall health.

✦ Acne can happen at any age. The best way to prevent acne is to keep your pores unclogged by regularly washing your face with a gentle cleanser and using an exfoliant to remove dead skin.

✦ Be wary of using scented products on your skin. While these lotions and creams may smell wonderful, many people are sensitive to fragrance. Using them can result in red, irritated skin. The same goes for scented laundry detergents and fabric softeners.

✦ Avoid long, hot showers and baths in the wintertime. They can dry out your skin, leaving you feeling itchy and miserable. Take short showers with lukewarm water, and use a moisturizing body lotion or cream after bathing.

✦ The best way to prevent premature aging of your skin is to wear a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 every day. Many moisturizers and cosmetics now contain sunscreen; wear them together to maximize your protection against the sun.

By paying attention to your skin and how it responds to different personal care products and routines, you can develop a simple regimen that keeps your skin looking and feeling great – and healthy.

November Is Healthy Skin Month.

Prayer: Loving God, just as my skin protects my body, I need to protect my skin. Help me remember to care for my skin and be watchful of changes that may indicate problems. Amen.

Skin Cancer

There are over two million cases of skin cancer discovered in the United States each year. While most of these cases are treatable, over 11,000 Americans die of skin cancer annually. Here are some tips for the prevention and early detection of skin cancer:

✦ Wear sunscreen on all exposed skin. Carry sunscreen with you so that you can reapply it during the day, particularly after exercise or swimming.

✦ Be cautious about being outdoors between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., which is when the sun's rays are most powerful. Wear a hat, sunglasses and protective clothing if you are going to be in the sun for long periods of time.

✦ Be alert. Skin cancer can take on many different forms. Moles that change color or shape can be a symptom of melanoma. Basal cell carcinoma may appear as a slightly raised, painless bump that is waxy, pearly or close to the shade of your skin. Squamous cell cancer may appear as a rough, scaly bump.

✦ Examine your skin regularly, and ask your doctor to do the same. By taking notice of moles and skin discolorations, you can develop a baseline of what is normal for your skin. If you notice changes, report them to your doctor immediately.

✦ Avoid tanning beds. If you want a suntan, choose a self-tanner or a spray-on tanning product.

Early detection is important in treating skin cancer. Even melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, has a five-year survival rate of 98% if caught while still localized. As the body's largest organ, your skin deserves utmost respect.

- advocatehealth.com
- cancer.org
- sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/10/081031161836 – Winter tips for skin
- cosmeticscop.com/sun-sunscreen-SPF.aspx