

# Supporting You

To understand and care for dry skin.

Patient Information

Supported by  
**Bio-Oil®**

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A new way  
to improve  
dry skin

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# What is dry skin?

**Dry skin is caused by a lack of oil in the skin, which causes the top layer of skin to dry out due to a lack of moisture.<sup>3</sup>**

When dry skin occurs, it means that the skin's natural barrier function has become compromised, and so the moisture that is usually locked in the skin becomes lost. In severe cases or if left untreated, dry skin can become flaky, itchy or even cracked, which can lead to inflammation.

Although dry skin can be experienced anywhere on the body, the most vulnerable areas are those with fewer oil glands – such as the hands, arms and legs.<sup>5</sup> Areas that experience friction, such as the ankles and soles of the feet, are also more likely to be affected.<sup>6</sup>

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## Dry skin versus healthy skin

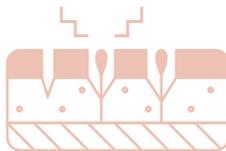
 Irritation and dryness

 Oil (Sebum)

 Top layer of the skin

 Moisture

 Keratinocytes (new skin cell production)



### Dry Skin

Moisture escapes easily, leaving skin prone to irritation.



### Healthy Skin

Sufficient moisture is preserved; skin is not prone to irritation.





# How to identify dry skin.

**If you have dry skin, you may experience one or more of the following signs<sup>7</sup>:**

- A dull or red/pink colour
- A flaky texture
- Peeling
- A sensation of itch

Most dry skin symptoms can be treated at home. However, in some cases, the dry skin can become irritated and inflamed and can sometimes become itchy. Once the skin is rubbed there is a release of histamine, which increases the urge to scratch, so the skin becomes more inflamed. This is known as the itch-scratch cycle.<sup>8</sup>

If you have repeatedly itched the area, the skin may appear thicker and may become darker or lighter than the surrounding skin.<sup>4</sup>

# What causes dry skin?

It's best to explore all possible causes when thinking about your dry skin as it could be the result of a number of things – including both internal and external factors.<sup>9</sup>



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## External

Fortunately, environmental factors that can be controlled are often the cause of dry skin. These include:

- Dehydration
- Particularly hot or cold weather, including central heating and air conditioning<sup>10</sup>
- Hot water – such as baths or showers<sup>6</sup>
- Certain detergents, washing and bathing products - especially those that contain alcohol or SLS, which can strip the skin of its natural oils<sup>3</sup>
- Swimming<sup>11</sup> and air travel<sup>12</sup>



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## Internal

Sometimes dry skin can develop as the result of certain health conditions or medications. Some common health conditions that can cause dry skin include:

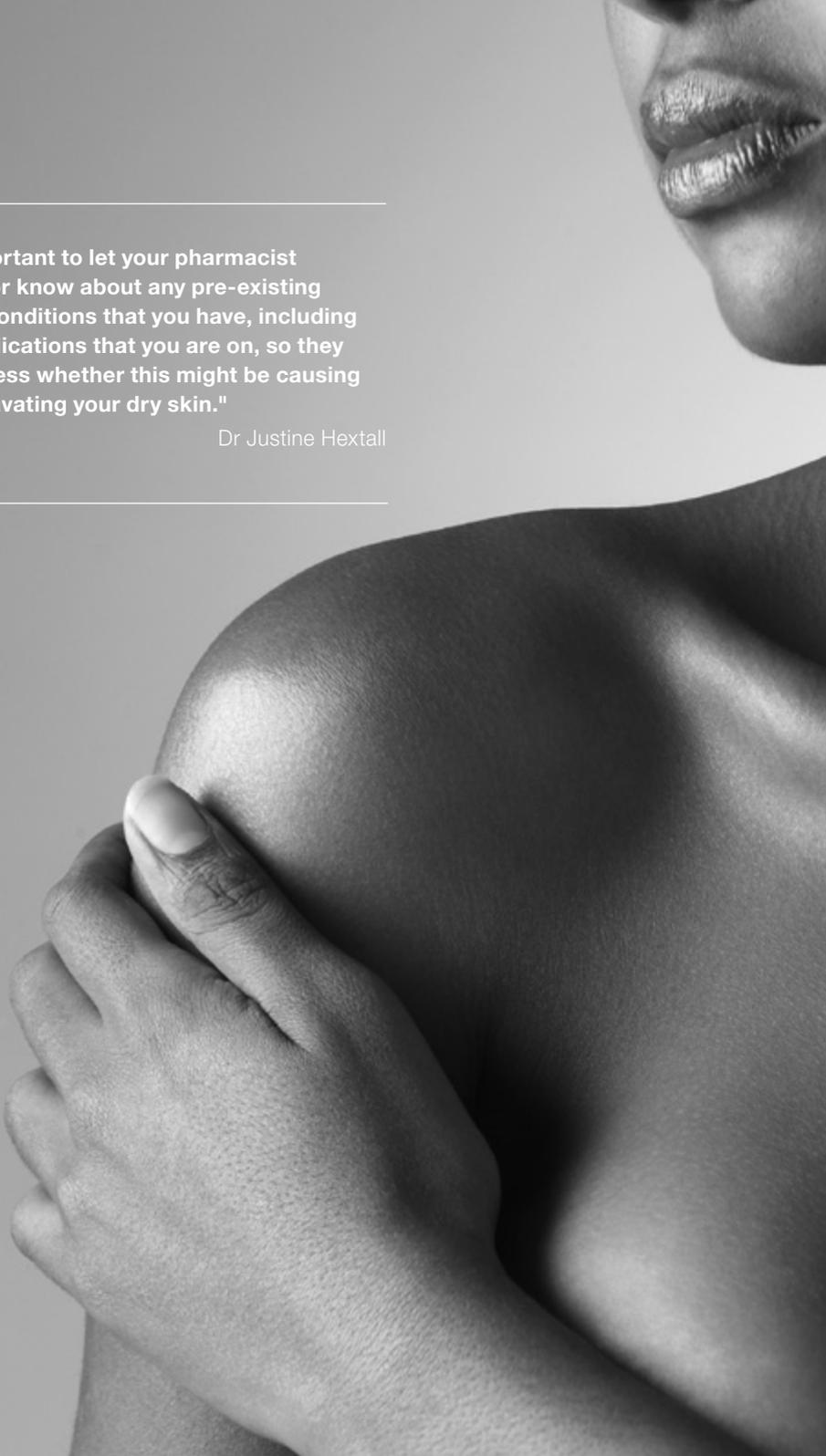
- Diabetes<sup>13</sup>
- Hypothyroidism<sup>14</sup>
- Menopause and hormonal imbalances<sup>15</sup>
- Kidney disease<sup>16</sup> and dialysis<sup>17</sup>
- Dermatitis or Psoriasis<sup>18</sup>

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**"It's important to let your pharmacist or doctor know about any pre-existing health conditions that you have, including any medications that you are on, so they can assess whether this might be causing or aggravating your dry skin."**

Dr Justine Hextall

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# Caring for dry skin.

There are a number of things that you can do to help prevent or improve dry skin.

## 1. Maintain a healthy lifestyle

- **Keep hydrated:** drink plenty of water to reduce dehydration.
- **Eat a healthy diet:** foods which contain healthy fats – such as oily fish and avocado – are particularly good for keeping the skin healthy. Proteins are also important for maintaining healthy skin as your body turns them into building blocks called amino acids and reuses them to make other proteins, including the collagen and keratin that form the structure of skin.<sup>19</sup>

## 2. Avoid extreme temperatures

- **Avoid hot showers:** Hot water will strip the skin of its protective oils, so have warm rather than hot showers and limit your time in the shower or bath to five or 10 minutes.<sup>6</sup>
- **Provide fresher air in the home:** Dry, hot air can cause moisture to evaporate from the skin. A humidifier can be helpful to reduce the hot air's drying effects.<sup>6</sup>
- **Wrap up warm:** Dry skin is most likely to occur during the winter, so it needs to be protected with warm clothes.<sup>3</sup>

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**"Pay attention to your mental health and how you're feeling emotionally as well as your physical health, as stress and anxiety can cause dry skin to flare-up. Trying activities such as yoga, meditation or reading, which help with relaxation, can have a positive impact on your mental health."**

Dr Justine Hextall

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## 3. Choose the right products

- **Avoid products that are harsh on the skin:** This includes products containing soap or alcohol, which can strip the skin of its natural oils. When the skin barrier becomes dry it is vulnerable to irritation and inflammation, so try to avoid irritants such as perfumes when buying skin products and always read the label.<sup>3</sup>
- **Choose a long lasting, well formulated solution:** For example Bio-Oil Dry Skin Gel, where all its ingredients contribute to improving dry skin.

## 4. Take care

- **Try not to scratch:** It's tempting, but scratching can introduce bacteria into cracked skin and increase the chances of infection.<sup>4</sup>
- **Be gentle:** When cleansing, look for a gentle, hydrating cleanser that does not leave the skin feeling tight after washing. Cleanse the skin after showering to remove soaps and shampoos from the delicate skin of the face.

# How to treat dry skin.

**Dry skin requires hydration to help keep it protected. Where possible, look to use a product that features a combination of the following components to hydrate skin optimally:**

## Occlusive agents

substances, such as oils and butters, which form a protective layer on top of the skin to trap in moisture and support the skin.<sup>20</sup>

## Humectants

which draw moisture into the skin. Glycerin is an example of a humectant.<sup>21</sup>

## Emollients

which help to improve the appearance of skin by filling in open spaces left by flaky skin cells, leaving it feeling smoother.<sup>22</sup>

## When to see a doctor

Luckily, most cases of dry skin respond well to lifestyle changes and a good skincare regime, but if you're concerned that the problem is not going away or it's getting worse, then it's advisable to visit your GP.

## It's also recommended that you visit a GP if:

- Dry skin is accompanied by redness
- Dryness and itching interfere with sleeping
- The skin is broken or appears infected (for example, as a result of scratching)
- You have large areas of skin that is inflamed, itchy, thickened or scaling, as this may represent a skin condition such as eczema or psoriasis and additional medication may be needed.<sup>23</sup>

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**"Make sure you speak to your pharmacist  
or GP for advice on how to find the right type  
of product to suit your needs."**

Dr Justine Hextall

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# Bio-Oil® Dry Skin Gel.

A new way to improve dry skin

**Bio-Oil's new Dry Skin Gel replenishes the skin's barrier and deeply moisturises.**

The gel-to-oil texture absorbs easily and creates a protective film to resist moisture loss. With just 3% water, this highly potent formulation blends emollients such as shea butter; humectants like urea; along with vitamin B3 for an exceptional moisturising result.

## User trial results

**62%** agreed that 'Bio-Oil Dry Skin Gel is better than any product they have ever used before to combat dry skin'<sup>24</sup>

**86%** agreed that 'their dry skin improved over the course of a two-week period'<sup>24</sup>

## Clinical trial results

**86%** agreed that they saw a difference after just two days of use<sup>25</sup>

## Application

Dry Skin Gel can be used all over the body. Apply a small amount to dry skin as required and massage in circular motions until fully absorbed. Use less than you would applying a cream.

Bio-Oil is non-comedogenic (doesn't block pores) and gentle enough to use on sensitive skin.<sup>26</sup>

Not suitable for children under the age of three.

**Find out more information on Bio-Oil Dry Skin Gel visit:** [www.bio-oil.com](http://www.bio-oil.com)



# Understanding and assessing your skin.

**The following notes pages are designed to help you assess your dry skin and identify what factors may be contributing to it.**

You may wish to discuss and complete this alongside your pharmacist or GP, or you may simply want to complete it for your own reference:

## Observing your dry skin:

- 1 What does your dry skin look like, (e.g. smooth or dry to touch/ what colour is it/ how does the dry skin appear – i.e. in patches)?  
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.....  
.....
- 2 How long have you been experiencing dry skin? Is this a long term problem or has there been a new trigger, i.e. medication or a certain product?  
.....  
.....
- 3 How does your skin feel (e.g. does it feel itchy or tight?)  
.....  
.....
- 4 Does your skin change after exposing it to certain situations, such as cleansing or washing?  
.....  
.....

## Considering your daily routine:

- 5 What makes your dry skin better?  
.....
- 6 What makes your dry skin worse?  
.....
- 7 When does your dry skin trouble you the most?  
.....
- 8 How many glasses of water do you drink a day?  
.....
- 9 What foods form a regular part of your diet?  
.....
- 10 How often and for how long do you bathe or shower?  
What temperature is the water?  
.....
- 11 What type of skincare products do you use (e.g. moisturising creams, soaps & shampoos)? Are they scented? Do they include ingredients such as SLS or alcohol/perfume?  
.....
- 12 Do you have any pre-existing health conditions or are you taking any medications? If so, list them here.  
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