

# Moisturizing: Hydrate Your Skin

## Handout 3

Moisturizers help maintain your skin's natural moisture levels, which the environment and your lifestyle frequently deplete. Moisturizers work by providing a seal over your skin – to keep water from escaping – or by slowly releasing water into your skin.

Apply moisturizers immediately after taking a shower or bath, as this helps to trap water in the upper layers of your skin. You may like the feel of an oil-in-water cream, such as Cetaphil or Vanicream. If you have dry skin, consider using a heavier, water-in-oil moisturizer, such as Eucerin or Nivea, rather than a light, disappearing moisturizing lotion that contains mostly water. If your skin is very dry, you may want to apply an oil, such as baby oil, while your skin is still moist. Oil has more staying power than moisturizers do and prevents the evaporation of water from the surface of your skin. If your skin is oily, you may prefer to skip moisturizing.

During the winter months, you may notice that your skin is drier. This is due to lower relative humidity, with a combination of cold air outside and dry heat indoors. Keeping the air in your home somewhat cool and humid may help, so consider purchasing a humidifier.

Facial moisturizers help hydrate the skin on your face. The moisturizer that is best for you and the frequency with which you need to moisturize depend on your skin type, your age and whether you have specific conditions such as acne or wrinkles. If you have oily skin, choose a light, oil-in-water product. Or, you may prefer not to moisturize. For sensitive skin, select products that have a good proportion of oil and water, rather than those that are primarily water. Look for products free of heavy dyes, perfumes or other additives. During the daytime, use a moisturizer with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 to help protect your skin from damaging ultraviolet rays, which can cause wrinkles, dark spots, rough skin and skin cancer.