

Do You Really Need to Moisturize Your Face?

Mira Miller | October 13, 2023



Photo Illustration by Amelia Manley for Verywell Health; Getty Images

You might have met a few people who say they never use any facial moisturizer and yet still seem to have glowy skin. So is it that bad if you skip using your face cream?

Experts say moisturizer is necessary to keep skin hydrated, particularly in the winter, although some skin types may not require as much added hydration.

If you have naturally oily skin, you might not need to use moisturizer as frequently because the natural oils on your face can help maintain hydration, said [Kimberly Lee, MD](#), a board-certified facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon based in Los Angeles.

Genetics can also play a critical role in determining how your skin manages without added moisture. Some people have more resilient skin and are better at retaining natural moisture, Lee said, and this can also help to delay the early signs of aging.

But if you have combination or dry skin, moisturizing is all the more important in the colder months.

“With cold and dry air in the winter, it can strip your skin of natural moisture, leading to water

loss through the skin and causing more dehydration, dryness, irritation, and flaking of the skin,” Lee said.

Indoor heating can also make things worse because it reduces humidity, she said. Depending on where you live, cold wind and freezing temperatures can damage the skin’s natural protective barrier, making it more susceptible to moisture loss and dryness.

Using hot water, exposure to harsh chemicals or environmental pollutants, and having a history of eczema can all contribute to skin dryness as well, according to Justine Park, MD, a board-certified dermatologist in West Hills, California.

“Some people might need to moisturize in the colder winter months, but not in the summer,” Park said. “Other people might need to moisturize more in the summer when they swim more and their skin gets drier from prolonged exposure to chlorinated pool water.”

Facial moisturizers often come with benefits beyond skin hydration, such as anti-aging properties, sun protection, and relief from discomfort associated with dry, itchy, or irritated skin.

How to Pick the Right Moisturizer for Your Skin

When searching for the best moisturizer to keep your skin hydrated this winter, Park recommends avoiding additives such as fragrances, parabens, and alcohol. Some moisturizers containing these ingredients might actually dry out your skin rather than hydrate it.

“If a lotion has a high concentration of alcohol in it, it might be doing more harm than good if your intention is to hydrate the skin,” Park said. “If you want to be completely safe, you can use a pure ingredient, such as coconut oil. I find it a bit messy to use, so I prefer to use something that can be purchased in a store.”

Brands such as Cerave, Cetaphil, Eucerin, Vanicream, and Amlactin are generally safe, Park said. You can also look for products that have ingredients like ceramides, glycerin, hyaluronic acid, and shea butter. These brands are a good choice when it comes to choosing a body cleanser as well, she said, as harsh soaps can also lead to dryness.

It’s also important to keep your skin type in mind when buying a moisturizer, according to Lee. Oily skin types, for example, should look for something lightweight, such as a water or gel-based moisturizer. She recommends using non-comedogenic products to prevent clogging your pores.

Sun protection also remains important during the winter months, Lee said, as UV rays can still damage your skin even if it’s not sunny. You can find moisturizers that contain SPF, or use a separate product if you’re looking for a physical block with a higher SPF.

“Of course, the best moisturizer for you may differ from what’s best for someone depending on your skin type, needs, and preferences,” Lee said. “But these are the essential factors to remember when choosing a moisturizer.”

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/what-happens-if-you-don-t-use-facial-moisturizer-8349473>