



## ALL ABOUT YOUR SKIN

Skin is a complex and multi-layered (literally and figuratively!) part of your body. Your skin is your largest organ. It covers your whole body! Your skin helps protect your body from the environment.

### The Layers of Your Skin

#### Epidermis

This is the outside layer that you can see and touch.



#### Dermis

This layer hides under your epidermis. You can't see it. In this layer, you will find things such as:

- blood vessels: They bring nutrients to your skin to keep it healthy.
- nerve endings: They tell your brain how things feel when you touch them.
- sweat glands: They make sweat to help you cool down if you get too warm.

#### Subcutis

This is the last layer. It is made up of mostly fat. It helps you stay warm and helps protect you from falls or bumps.

### Jobs of the Skin

Your skin has lots of important jobs so part of taking good care of yourself is taking care of your skin.

- It holds you together, literally. Your skin keeps your insides from being outside. That's a lot of responsibility!
- It protects you by keeping contaminants such as germs and UV radiation from your environment out of your body.
- It absorbs and processes nutrients and other things you need, including vitamin D.
- It keeps your temperature just right; not too cool and not too hot. When it's healthy and working right your skin is able to make adjustments to warm you up if needed or cool you down.
- It allows you to feel things you touch because it houses your nerve endings.

## Common Skin Problems

- Pimples/zits/whiteheads/blackheads: These are all different names for the irritation that happens when pores get blocked by oil and dead skin. Most people get pimples at some point in their lives and they are most common during the teenage years due to hormonal changes
- Acne: This is the term for when you have quite a few pimples and/or have them consistently over time.
- Rashes: There are about a bazillion different reasons people get rashes (OK, maybe not quite that many...but a lot). It's important to show any rash to an adult you trust such as your parent or doctor to decide whether or not it needs to be treated.
- Dandruff: The white flakes you might see on the shoulders of your black shirt seem like a hair problem, but it's actually a skin problem. Dandruff is caused by flaking dead skin on your scalp. Different treatments work for different people, but if you have a problem with dandruff you can:
  - try a dandruff shampoo
  - try varying how often you shampoo and condition your hair
  - follow the tips above for healthy skin. In severe cases, a doctor can prescribe a prescription shampoo but many people can get dandruff under control with a few simple changes.

## How to Care for Your Skin

- Wash regularly (two times a day) with a gentle cleanser. No scrubbing.
- Stay hydrated. This means to drink plenty of liquids (water is best!).
- Protect your skin from the sun with sunscreen and/or protective clothing.
- Moisturize as needed with a gentle moisturizer.
- Choose healthful foods and beverages. Be sure to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. Avoid processed foods and those with a lot of additives.
- If you have acne, treat it with an over-the-counter medicine or go see a dermatologist (a skin doctor). Never pick as that will make it worse and potentially cause lasting damage to your skin.
- If you have other skin problems (such as eczema, athlete's foot, rashes or warts) talk to a doctor or a dermatologist. A lot of skin care problems can be healed with the right treatment.
- Don't smoke. Smoking narrows the tiny blood vessels in the outermost layers of skin which decreases blood flow. This depletes the skin of oxygen and nutrients that are important to skin health.
- Manage stress. Stress can cause a lot of skin problems, including acne.

