

The importance of winter skin and hair care

BY NANCY SUNDSTROM
Special to the Record-Eagle

Many tend to think of the sun-drenched summer months as the time to pay attention to your skin and hair, but experts can argue a case for even more care during winter-time.

For starters, dehydration can be at the root of a range of skin and hair problems.

Though you might not think you're as thirsty during the winter, it is critical to drink water during all seasons of the year to moisturize your skin from the inside out. Water is needed for all body processes and dehydration shows first in

the skin and the lips.

It can easily occur during active winter sports like cross country skiing or snow shoeing. As part of a daily routine and especially if you are exercising, consume plenty of water, with sports beverages, juices and teas to stay hydrated. Avoid alcohol, which actually promotes dehydration, as does excessive intake of caffeine. The best tip is to enjoy your coffee or tea in moderation and drink plenty of water.

Another way to insure that your body has all it needs to maintain good skin health in winter is through vitamins. Vitamin A and Beta-Carotene

are considered excellent for this and can be found in dark orange, deep green and red vegetables. Be sure to include at least one serving of Vitamin A-rich foods every day for skin and eye health.

Vitamin D is called "The Sunshine Vitamin" because this hormone-like vitamin resides in an inactive form in the fat tissues under our skin. Sunlight is required to activate vitamin D, which is crucial to bone health and other body processes. Try to get outside and take in 15 minutes or so of sunlight most days of the week during the winter months. Daily consumption of

Vitamin D-fortified milk and dairy products also help with this effort.

Another nourishment consideration is that healthy fats work to maintain a healthy immune system and healthy skin, and a diet that is too low in fat (less than 10 percent of total calories) can lead to dry, scaly and itchy skin. Essential fats, as they are called, are required by the body and can be found in nuts, seeds, flax seed, vegetable oils and Omega-3 fat-rich fish like salmon, tuna and lake trout.

Nicole Maile, owner of Euphoria in Traverse City, a specialty boutique that car-

ries a wide range of beauty and aromatherapy products and accessories, says she recommends a basic three-step program, followed by a few other essential tips for good winter grooming.

Step one, she said, is to cleanse with vegetable-based soaps that are super-moisturizing and won't strip the skin's natural skin. The second is to exfoliate, which is important in getting rid of the skin's surface of built-up dead skin cells. Finally, moisturize, especially after bathing. Pat your skin dry with a towel and apply moisturizer while still

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