



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY HEALTH CENTER

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## Xerosis (Chapped Skin)

Low humidity and cold weather contribute to loss of moisture from the skin, resulting in Xerosis or “chapped skin”. Dry, cracked skin can become itchy and irritated, and secondary infection can occur.

Treatment consists of:

- 1) restoring moisture to the skin and;
  - 2) stopping the itch-scratch cycle so irritated skin can heal.
- Cleanse with a gentle soap (Cetaphil Soap, Oil of Olay, Dove, or Basis).
  - Apply moisturizer frequently (Cetaphil Cream, Moisturel, or Eucerin).
  - Drink plenty of water.
  - Minimize the number of showers and baths per week and avoid very hot water and pat dry with towel.
  - A thin film of over-the-counter Cortisone cream 0.5% applied twice a day may alleviate itching but should not be used long term.

If these recommendations do not result in relief or if your symptoms worsen, see a health practitioner.

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**Published for the University of Maryland community.**

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