

November is Healthy Skin Month!!!

Why Be Nice to Your Skin?

Like the heart, stomach, and brain, your skin is an organ. In fact, it's the largest organ in your body, but it's still easy to take skin for granted. Unless there's a problem, you may not think about your skin very much. But skin has an important job to do. Your skin is constantly protecting you. Your skin keeps infections out of your body and keeps you from getting sick. When you take care of your skin, you're helping your skin do its job. And taking care of your skin today will help prevent future problems, like wrinkles and even skin cancer.

Clean Skin Is Happy Skin

One simple way to take care of your skin is to keep it clean. Keeping your hands clean is especially important because your hands can spread germs to the skin on other parts of your body. When washing your hands, use water that's comfortably warm. Wet your hands, then lather up with a mild soap. You should lather and rub everywhere, including the palms, the wrists, between the fingers, and under the nails. Rinse well, dry thoroughly with a clean towel, and you're done! You'll also want to use water that's warm, not too hot, when you take a shower or bath. Use a gentle soap to clean your body. Don't forget under your arms and behind your ears! Your face needs attention, especially as you enter puberty and the skin on your face gets more oily. It's a good idea to wash your face once or twice daily with warm water and a mild cleanser.

There is one product that everyone needs: **sunscreen**. Even if your skin is naturally dark, you still need to use a sunscreen. Protecting your skin from the sun prevents sunburn, which hurts and is a kind of skin damage. Sunscreen also can help prevent wrinkles when you get older and can decrease the risk of skin cancer, which is caused by exposure to the sun's harmful rays. Choose a sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 30 or 45, and apply it evenly. Try not to miss any spots, such as your neck or the middle of your back. Have a friend or your parent help you with the hard-to-reach spots. Follow the directions on the sunscreen, which often recommend reapplying it, especially after swimming or sweating. Because sunscreen cannot protect your skin completely from the sun, it's also a good idea to wear a brimmed hat and use a lip balm containing sunscreen. If you need more protection from the sun, wear long sleeves and pants. Also, avoid the sun between 10 AM and 2 PM.

