

Dry Skin? Dry Eyes? Dry Everything?



Is your purse filled with creams, moisturizing eye drops, and various lotions? Does your lip balm go wherever you do? Has your favorite moisturizer stopped working?

Dryness is an itchy, flaky reality for many women, evidenced by the plethora of products we tote around to deal with it.

Those products momentarily coat, but they never actually change dry skin. Why? Because moisture comes from the inside, and when you feel more like a raisin than a grape, something internal is amiss.

While dryness is exacerbated with chronic dehydration, dry air, and certain medications, the actual cause may surprise you. Healthy, moisturized skin relies on your metabolism — specifically how well you digest dietary fats. And fat digestion can get much worse during perimenopause (more on that in a minute).

Like the skin of a grape, healthy fats provide a flexible, waterproof barrier for skin and eyes. Good fat keeps water where it should be and prevents us from looking and feeling like raisins.

Your body uses digested fats to build healthy, moist, lubricated barrier between your insides and the outside world — your skin. That's true whether on your face, eyes, heels, or lady parts.

At least, that's what's supposed to happen. But if you have difficulty digesting fats, the fat you eat can't be extracted from your food and used to waterproof your skin.

Instead, it passes through you undigested, resulting in light clay-colored, greasy bowel movements (sorry) on top of skin dryness.

Enter your liver and gallbladder, your fat-digesting dynamic duo. These two work together for healthy skin.

As long as your liver and gallbladder aren't overburdened and you eat enough good fats, you can rebuild your skin's natural moisture.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

Your liver makes bile, a fluid that breaks down fats in foods. Bile is stored in your gallbladder, a handy little pouch that squirts out a splash of it every time you eat fat. When you eat a bite of avocado, a handful of macadamia nuts, or a slice of bacon, bile dissolves fats into petite droplets that your body uses for waterproofing, keeping skin moist and supple.

Healthy bile is thin and fluid, like water, and it's very caustic. However, if your liver is congested from decades of sweets, alcohol, artificial chemicals, and processed fats (did you grow up on margarine?), it can produce bile that is thick and slow like peanut butter.

Not only does thick, sludgy bile increase your risk for developing gallstones, but it's a disaster for digesting fats — which eventually leads to dry skin and eyes.

While anyone with liver congestion can have compromised fat digestion and dry skin, most affected are women who:

- are estrogen dominant (too much estrogen or not enough progesterone), often the result of chronic stress
- take or have taken estrogen in birth control or hormone replacement therapy
- have excess body fat (extra body fat = extra stored estrogen)

Why? Extra estrogen thickens bile, making it harder for the body to digest fats, and moisture and lubrication suffer.

During peri-menopause your body releases excess estrogen into your blood so your liver can package it for removal. If your liver is healthy, the extra estrogen is whisked away and all is good.

But if your liver is congested or you have sludgy bile, the sudden surge of estrogen can make bile even thicker, burdening your liver and interfering with fat digestion and healthy skin.

GET YOUR MOISTURE BACK

To help your body moisturize again, take these steps.

1. Unburden your liver: Reduce alcohol, sugar, and refined carbohydrates; remove processed foods and trans-fats. If you smoke, take steps to quit (your liver has to filter everything you breathe).

2. Detox: Work with an experienced functional medicine doctor to help safely thin your bile and support natural liver detoxification. Include more egg yolks and grass-fed

liver, which contain bile-thinning choline. Add steamed cruciferous vegetables, beets, and bitter herbs like arugula to your diet.

Contact your health care provider if you have pain, nausea, or vomiting after eating fatty meals. These can be signs of a gallbladder attack, which can be life threatening.

3. Eat good fat: As your fat digestion improves, include more healthy fats (avocado, olive oil, coconut oil, macadamias, even saturated fats from ghee and grass-fed beef). Among my favorites for women are pastured egg yolks and black currant seed oil.

With a little time, your skin will be silky soft again — and your liver will thank you.

IS YOUR DRYNESS REALLY A FAT-DIGESTION PROBLEM?

Ask yourself these questions. If you answer yes to one or more, your dry skin may be the result of poor fat digestion and you may want to seek qualified help.

- Your skin and/or eyes seem to need constant moisture.
- Within a half-hour of eating you feel bloated or pressure to burp/belch.
- You have gallstones (or your gallbladder has been removed).
- Your bowel movements are light/clay colored and float.
- You follow a ketogenic diet and have frequent loose bowels.
- You have frequent pain between your right shoulder blade and spine.



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