



spotlight on health

Finding Relief For Dry Skin

(NAPSA)—One of the most brutal cities on your skin is...*Phoenix, Ariz.*?

The city earned that dubious distinction because of its unrelenting 90-plus-degree weather. As cold spots like Kodiak, Alaska, also made the list, it's clear that the sun isn't the only culprit behind dry skin.

In fact, dermatologists say that dry, itchy feeling familiar to as many as 81 million Americans can be caused by any number of things: overly long, hot showers, soaps and detergents, and even environmental factors. And worse news is that dry skin can lead to more than discomfort.

"The skin is the body's first line of defense," says Dr. Jessica Wu, an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the University of Southern California Medical School. "When skin is dry, it becomes cracked and irritated—leaving skin looking and feeling unhealthy."

Dr. Wu recommends the following tips for dealing with dry skin:

- Stress can affect circulation and lead to dry skin—just ask people in Chicago. Their high stress levels landed the Windy City on the Vaseline Clinical Therapy Driest Skin Cities List, so find a way to de-stress every day.

- Use sunscreen, with at least SPF 30, even in cold months, on your face, neck, ears, the back of your hands and anywhere else that's exposed to the elements. Sunlight reflects off the snow, so you may be getting a double dose of UV rays from the winter sun.

- Use a prescription-strength moisturizer like Vaseline Clinical Therapy Lotion to seal moisture in the skin. It's 60 percent more moisturizing than a prescription



Treating dry skin relieves discomfort and could help protect your health.

lotion and it provides instant relief, long-lasting protection and sustained recovery to dry skin.

- After your shower or bath—which should be short to avoid stripping skin of its protective oils—pat, don't rub, when towel drying.

- Wear cotton, silk or other soft fabrics. Scratchy wools and other fibers can irritate dry, sensitive skin.

- Use a humidifier at night to replace the moisture that's sucked from the air by indoor heat.

- Drink plenty of fluids and add essential fats—like omega-3s found in salmon, flaxseed and nuts—to your daily diet.

To help people in Kodiak, Alaska, fight off dry skin, Vaseline gave its prescription-strength lotion to resident Petal Ruch, who could "prescribe" it to anyone she thought needed it. Since then, the "prescription chain" has spread across the country.

You can watch the chain grow at www.prescribethenation.com. The site also features the complete Driest Skin Cities List, which includes Denver, Colo. (for its high altitude), Madison, Wis. (for its low temperatures) and San Diego, Calif. (for its hard water).