

IS YOUR SKIN SENSITIVE OR SENSITIZED?

Debunk skin myths and make skin health your priority this Cetaphil Skin Awareness Month.

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Both sensitive and sensitized skin experience a weakened skin barrier, irritation, roughness, dryness, and tightness, so addressing the five signs of skin sensitivity with the same approach should work... right?

Myth! Knowing the difference between sensitive and sensitized skin is essential in understanding how to address your skin concerns.

What's the difference? Skin sensitivity is deeply rooted in genetics and is often connected to non-related skin sensitivities like allergies, asthma, emotional cues like blushing, or hormonal issues like a stress rash.

Meanwhile, sensitized skin is not a skin type but a skin condition triggered by external or internal factors. The confusion is understandable; the symptoms appear similar to sensitive skin. It can be a reaction to a medication that you are taking. It can be because of a poor diet; intolerances to certain foods and allergic reactions from anything like your hair products to your laundry detergents come into play. It can also be caused by extreme environmental conditions like too much sun or air conditioning. Are you trying out a skincare fad? It can also be your skin telling you that you're overloading it with harsh ingredients.

While sensitive skin as a skin type and sensitized skin as a skin condition can both experience any or all five signs of skin sensitivity, sensitized skin can be treated and resolved, while sensitive skin is something you're born with—but something you can address and support.

That being said, treating your sensitive or sensitized skin isn't the time to second-guess and experiment. We dispel some myths and explain some facts. You can achieve healthy skin with proper care and science-backed facts and formulas.

MYTH: DRY AND TIGHT SKIN = CLEAN

While cleansing is an essential step in any effective skincare regimen, harsh cleansers and products can sensitize any skin type by stripping the skin of natural oils, often leading to an increase in breakouts, redness, inflammation, and irritation. This is why Dermatologists have been recommending Cetaphil's Gentle Skin Cleanser for 75 years. It's been improved for modern skin concerns since. It now includes Niacinamide (Vitamin B3), which helps strengthen the skin barrier, improve tone, and soothe skin; Panthenol (Vitamin B5), which helps increase skin's hydration while decreasing overall water loss for a more supple appearance and soothing skin sensitivity; and Glycerin, which draws water into the skin to improve and maintain hydration levels—all while effectively cleansing the skin. Experiencing some roughness and dullness? The new Daily Exfoliating Cleanser sloughs off dead skin without physical exfoliants, which can be irritating to both sensitive and sensitized skin.

FACT: TOO MUCH UNPROTECTED SUN EXPOSURE IS BAD FOR YOUR SKIN

The sun is a natural source of Vitamin D, but too much of it, especially when your skin is weakened, can result in painful symptoms like redness and peeling. When you can't stay under the shade, sunscreen not only guards against skin cancer—it is also the most essential of antiaging products, preventing brown spots and wrinkles while keeping existing ones from deepening. A sunscreen with at least an SPF (sun protection factor) of 15 up to 30 is sufficient for indoor use, found in several Cetaphil hydrating products, while SPF 50+ is the minimum for sun exposure. Not all sunscreens are created equal. Many do more harm than good by sensitizing the skin with high and irritating alcohol content, while some are gritty and leave an unflattering telltale white cast. Cetaphil Sun SPF 50+ feels seasonally soothing without stinging and is easy to apply and spread while drying down to a healthy-looking glow. Apply two fingers' worth of sunscreen to your face and add one more for your neck and ears.

MYTH: YOU DON'T NEED TO MOISTURIZE WHEN YOUR SKIN IS OILY

The truth is, our skin does a great job of protecting itself. Our skin creates a barrier that works to keep environmental irritants out by producing natural oils. However, if you have sensitive skin, your skin barrier is weakened, so your skin doesn't only keep irritants out; it also lets more water out, leading to skin dehydration. While some experienced dryness and tightness, some skin types overcompensate with an excess of oil, leading to clogged pores.

A hydrating, lightweight layer of moisture supports a healthy skin barrier. Restoring moisture to sensitized skin helps protect your skin from external irritants or allergens that may cause dry skin and inflammation while your skin repairs itself—something that Cetaphil's Moisturizing Lotion, Rich Night Cream with Hyaluronic Acid, and Hydrating Eye Cream Serum are specially formulated to do. The right products restore the natural skin's hydration and sustainably hydrate the skin over time.

FACT: ECZEMA REQUIRES SPECIAL CARE

Just moisturizing won't do for eczema-prone skin. You may have a gene deficiency for making Filaggrin, a protein essential for skin hydration and integrity of the skin barrier. A lack of Filaggrin makes it easier for moisture to escape as your skin barrier is compromised, making your skin vulnerable and prone to dehydration. Look for Dermatologist-recommended formulations with this ingredient found in Cetaphil PRO AD Derma's Skin Restoring Wash and Skin Restoring Moisturizer.

The two-step regimen delivers Filaggrin to the skin and helps rebuild a healthy skin barrier. This, in turn helps soothe your skin and reduces itchiness, which aids in stopping the itch-scratch cycle for people with eczema-prone skin. Because eczema can hit you at any age, the formulation is safe for babies and adults.

MYTH: YOU MUST SUFFER FOR BEAUTY—ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO BRIGHTER SKIN.

You don't have to peel and painfully scrub your way to even out your skin tone. When it comes to brightening products, look for active ingredients with Niacinamide and Sea Daffodil that gently brightens uneven skin tone and dark spots the healthy way, without the redness and irritation in just 4 weeks. These ingredients are in Cetaphil's Bright Healthy Radiance, a complete skin brightening range. You can gently cleanse the skin of excess oils and dirt with the Brightness Reveal Creamy Cleanser, prep the skin to accept the active ingredients with Brightness Refresh Toner and treat while locking in moisture with the Brightening Day Protection Cream SPF15 for day and Brightening Night Comfort Cream at bedtime. Don't forget to apply this all the way down to your décolletage and top up the Day Protection Cream with SPF50+ during the day. Are you concerned about unevenness in your body? The Brightness Reveal Bar, Brightness Reveal Body Wash, and Brightening Lotion all deliver the same effective ingredients and much-needed 24-hour hydration and lasting relief, returning skin to its naturally radiant, healthy, and supple-looking nature.

FACT: YOU CAN BUILD THE RIGHT FOUNDATION FOR HEALTHY SKIN

A baby's skin is delicate. Any irritation experiences now may affect their skin health as they grow up. With an early start, the right, gentle skincare products will help care for their holistic well-being. They'll thank you for their healthy, nourished, supple skin when they grow up. Cetaphil Baby has a full range with the Gentle Wash & Shampoo, Daily Lotion, Shampoo, Baby Gentle Cleansing Bar, Moisturizing Bath & Wash, and Advanced Protection Cream.

MYTH: YOU NEED A 10-STEP REGIMEN FOR CLEAR SKIN.

Often, harsh skincare regimens are the leading cause of sensitized skin. An elaborate skincare routine also means an overlord of irritating ingredients. It might be what's causing dryness and irritation. If your skin has become sensitized, simplify your routine to just a few steps.

FACT: YOUR SKIN WILL HEAL.

If you're sensitive-skinned, you know now that you require a personalized skincare routine that soothes your existing symptoms while supporting your skin's function. If your skin is sensitized, eliminate environmental irritants and switch to a science-backed and gentle alternative to help restore your skin health.

Don't be disheartened and start slow. Whether you're treating eczema symptoms or want to brighten your way to beautiful skin without irritation, there's a Dermatologist-backed Cetaphil product for your regimen. Not sure which product is right for your needs? Consult a Dermatologist so you can start with a skincare regimen tailored to you.

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