

# Keeping your skin healthy while enjoying the Sisters Country winter

By Ceili Cornelius | Columnist

PHOTO BY CODY RHEAULT

It is no secret that winter in Central Oregon is cold and dry. That kind of environment is not ideal for the skin anywhere on our bodies, but it's especially rough on the face. Dryness on the surface of the skin can wreak havoc and create break-outs that nobody wants going into the new year.

When your skin is dry, it overcompensates in its natural oil production, clogging pores and creating pimples, cystic acne, and sometimes dry, rashy dermatitis. As Central Oregonians living in this harsh environment for many months, we want to create the best habitat for our skin that we can.

In the past, due to harsh environment and other factors, I have suffered from what is known as perioral dermatitis. According to the Cleveland Clinic, "perioral dermatitis is a red rash that circles your mouth. Your skin can be scaly, dry, and flaky with swollen, inflamed bumps called papules. It is one of many types of dermatitis. Perioral dermatitis can look like acne and is often mistaken for it."

There is no real knowledge as to what exactly causes this type of dermatitis, and when I had it, dermatologists and estheticians told me many different things that could cause it — from hormones to topical products, to diet, to the natural environment around me. I decided to take all the thoughts from these various practitioners and come to my own conclusion about what works for my skin and for healing inflammation and irritation on the face.

I wanted to figure out all the various elements that could be contributing to my skin rash and irritation. I didn't suffer from severe acne, but I used all the same methods you would to combat acne — from diet change to topical product change — to reverse the damage to my skin and manage it when a flare-up occurs.

Sarah Woods, owner of Roam Natural Skincare in Sisters, helped me on my journey to healing my skin

and working with natural products to help heal the skin barrier. She also provided some tips for the local community on maintaining healthy skin during the winter months.

"One of the most important things is to maintain the lipid barrier with moisture on the outer layer of the skin," she said.

One contributor to dry skin is how busy we all get: We go into autopilot on our skin care routine.

Woods emphasized, "It is important to be cognizant of the changing environment and not having just a blanket skin care routine, and having different products to reach for when the season changes."

It is important to remember how the skin responds to different types of products, as well as routine. The nighttime skin care routine is when you want to apply heavier products such as moisturizers and oils, because the night is when our skin heals itself. The morning wash is important because that washes off all the dead skin that the body has cycled over during the night.

A good cleanser is the foundation of a good skin care routine.

"A cleanser is what changes the pH the most in the skin and it is different for everyone, but it's good to have a morning and nighttime cleanser," said Woods.

Another aspect of winter skin care is the use of a good facial oil.

"There are different molecular levels of oils out there that affect the skin differently. Something like jojoba oil is really good because it lasts into the skin longer than a coconut or vitamin-E oil which tends to just sit on surface of the skin," said Woods.

The use of facial oil directly on my skin provided a huge transformation, because I was providing the moisture and natural oil it needs directly preventing the skin from working harder to keep moisturized when it's cold and dry.

Woods also emphasized the importance of having a simple morning and night routine that includes a cream-based cleanser, a good water-based serum such as a high-quality hyaluronic acid serum, a good facial oil, and/or a good moisturizer.

"I try to change out my routine every change of season with products and types of products I use to accommodate the changing environment, and then just trying to remain consistent with that routine," said Woods.

You can visit Sarah Woods at Roam Natural Skincare and learn the brands of natural skin care products that she recommends for your skin.

Marianne Kennedy, owner of Radiant Day Spa in Sisters, also spoke with *The Nugget* about some tips she has for helping treat dry, irritated, and inflamed skin.

"A change in climate can cause the skin to go into shock, but if you maintain a good regime over time, the skin will regulate itself," she said.

"A lot of people tend to over-exfoliate when they see more dry skin on the face, which is actually stripping the acid mantle which is what protects the skin, so it becomes vulnerable," said Kennedy.

She emphasized the importance of hydrating your body by drinking more water in these winter months, as well as providing more moisture directly to the face and looking at the active ingredients in your products.

"Look for products that have your hyaluronic acids, lactic acids, and water binding molecules. Make sure you eliminate any products that have alcohol in them — especially in your toners and sprays — as alcohol is very drying," she said.

No matter where you are in your skin care journey, it is important to have some sort of basic routine, especially if you start experiencing dry, irritated skin all of a sudden — your body is telling you that you need to do more work to take care of the skin.

"A basic routine includes cleansing, using a good toner to balance out the pH, having a moisturizer, and staying consistent with that routine. It is important to remain consistent especially when it comes to the skin," said Kennedy.

Radiant Day Spa in Sisters is a partner with Éminence, a Hungarian natural skin care brand.

"We have a Vitaskin line of Éminence that is really good for this time of year, and we have that as a 'facial in a bag,' which is a really great way to try out the product," she said.

Radiant will be offering Radiant Select facials during this season that are specific to what type of skin treatment you might need. You can visit Radiant Day Spa, Tuesday through Friday, and get a free skin consultation from an esthetician on site.

I worked on taking care of my skin and invested in natural products that last a long time. That has allowed me to heal the dermatitis that I had suffered from for many months. Once the winter months come around, I must take extra care and make sure that I am maintaining my routine when my skin is more vulnerable.

These tips and ideas to maintain moisturized, healthy skin throughout the winter months are general tips and ideas for treatment. If you have specific questions regarding your skin or don't know exactly where to start, it is highly recommended to seek the advice of a licensed esthetician. Both Kennedy and Woods, at their respective spas, offer skin care consultations and would love to have you come in and chat with them about what you are looking for or whatever questions you might have.

Everyone's skin is different, and everyone's routine is different. It is important to remain consistent and maintain something that *you* find works for *you* in your skincare journey.