



What's In Your Bag?

HIGHLY SENSITIVE SKIN – How To Cope Beautifully



Most women seem to cling to the belief that they have sensitive skin. Yet according to **New York Dermatologist Judith Hellman, M.D.** bigappleskin.com; “Only about 20% of people actually have sensitive skin by definition, and it is more common in women than in men.” Sensitive skin means different things to different people. Many people experience skin irritations from specific ingredients at one time or another and it can occur in all skin types and in all age groups. Some of us are just born with sensitive skin, but the environment also plays a role in creating reactive skin situations.

Climactic changes like hot weather and sun exposure can remove many of the natural humectants that are found in the skin. Dry skin exacerbates any sensitivities you may have, so if your skin feels dry, tight and itchy, it will be more prone to reactions. Anything that damages your skin’s outer protective barrier in the environment can predispose you to developing red, itchy skin. Fair, thin and fragile complexions are also at risk for skin cancer, rosacea and broken capillaries. Skin may become more sensitive with age due to these effects along with a decreased barrier function as skin thins over time.

Limiting the amount of ingredients you use on your skin whenever possible is helpful. Whether you have truly sensitive skin or just experience frequent skin irritations, the key is to find out what you are sensitive to and to try to avoid it. Reactions can occur as the result of an allergic response of the skin to environmental allergens such as food or pollen. “Sensitive skin requires avoidance of any irritants that can cause inflammation including soaps, detergents, fragrances, colorants, and alcohol. Fragrance is the number one cause of cosmetic sensitivity,” says Dr. Hellman. Avoid trying more

than one new product at a time. If you experience a reaction, figure out what caused it, wash it off immediately, and discontinue use.

Sensitive skin also reacts to the way it is treated. Harsh treatment over time can lead to increasingly sensitive skin. If you are too aggressive with your skin care regimen, you may aggravate your reactive skin more, so avoid large particle, rough scrubs, heavy handed rubbing with a wash cloth or other mechanical exfoliants. Use only detergent-free gentle cleansers that do not strip skin of its natural moisture such as **Avene Extremely Gentle Cleanser for Intolerant Skin** aveneusa.com . Add mild exfoliation twice a week or as tolerated to help rebalance skin; **Aveeno Skin Brightening Daily Scrub** aveeno.com gently exfoliates with soy. Light textured moisturizers can be applied when the skin is still wet after showering to trap the water in the skin. **La Roche Posay Toleriane Ultra Intense Soothing Care** laroche-posay.us includes glycerin, shea butter and calming agents to reduce irritation on contact. Apply twice daily on cleansed skin for long lasting soothing effects. Irritated skin breaks down elasticity and may increase premature aging if you do not take care of it properly. When your barrier function is weakened, the skin's natural defenses can be compromised and irritants like pollution and UV rays can easily penetrate. Sensitive skin needs extra protection to repair the symptoms which can result when the epidermis has been exposed to irritants. Daily sun protection is essential and physical sunscreen ingredients like zinc oxide or titanium dioxide are preferred. Unlike chemical sunscreen agents that absorb UV rays, physical sunscreen ingredients deflect the rays rather than absorb them. **SkinCeuticals Physical Fusion UV Defense SPF 50** skinceuticals.com is one of this season's must-have broad spectrum formulas that contains titanium dioxide and Z-Cote (zinc oxide) with a universal tint that works for all skin tones.

CARING FOR SENSITIVE SKIN:

- 1 Use products that contain less than 10 ingredients- The fewer ingredients, the less chance of a reaction.
- 2 Use silicone-based foundations – Liquid foundations with a silicone base tend to have a lower incidence of skin irritation
- 3 Choose powder or mineral makeup- Powder cosmetics are good for removing shine, tend to have few preservatives and other ingredients that can cause irritation. Pure mineral makeup is feather light enough for the most reactive skin types.
- 4 Avoid waterproof cosmetics – Waterproof cosmetics require a solvent to remove them that also strips the natural oil barrier which can leave skin exposed to potential irritants and cause breakouts.
- 5 Throw out old cosmetics – Keep track of cosmetic expiration dates and wash makeup brushes and sponges regularly to avoid bacteria.