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Tips for sensitive skin

Sensitive skin can be a symptom that can adversely impact an individual's quality of life and is a relatively common presentation to a cosmetic dermatologist, particularly facial sensitive skin. There are a number of reasons for facial sensitive skin such as rosacea or an impaired skin barrier function in eczema and the correct diagnosis must be established first prior to treatment. Nevertheless, the below are general tips for individuals with facial sensitive skin which can help reduce or alleviate these symptoms:

- Use a cleanser that is suitable for sensitive skin and avoid excessive cleansing. Cleansers such as Cetaphil Gentle Cleanser, Neutrogena Gentle Cleanser, Avene Extremely Gentle Cleanser and La-Roche-Posay Toleriane Dermo Cleanser are suitable for sensitive skin.
- Avoid the use of scrubs (including brushes and towels) and exfoliants and limit exfoliation to only when needed and start with once a week.
- Avoid the use of high concentration retinol or retinoic acid and use it in low frequency and short application time starting with the lowest possible concentration. Applying a moisturizer 30 minutes before and afterwards can help reduce the sensation of sensitive skin.
- Avoid using products which contain alcohol and acids. Minimise the use of a toner or use alcohol-free toners only.
- Sensitive skin can be caused by a disruptive skin barrier and therefore using moisturizers and products that strengthen the barrier are essential. Products such as hyaluronic acid, ceramides and nicotinamide/niacinamide can be very helpful. Moisturizers are an essential part of sensitive skin routine and should be used at least twice a day.
- Avoid applying scented products containing perfumes.
- Use a physical sunscreen with ingredients such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide instead of chemical sunscreens which can contain products that causes sensitivity or in some cases even contact dermatitis. Ingredients such as oxybenzone and avobenzone are to be avoided.

- Avoid excessive use of alpha-hydroxy acids and start with low frequency and choose the products suitable for sensitive skin.
- Use some calming serums or creams aimed at alleviating symptoms of stinging and burning sensation such as skinceuticals phytocorrector serum or La-Roche-Posay Toleriane sensitive ultra cream.
- Cooling the skin down with cool compresses or cooled camomile tea soaks can help reduce the sensitive skin sensation. Hot showers can aggravate sensitive skin.
- Use hydrating or calming masks such as skinceuticals phytocorrector masque or hydrating B5 masque once or twice a week.



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