

Beware The Dust Ball, And Other Caveats For Sensitive Skin

(NAPSA)—We've all seen how touchy Americans are about certain issues—money being just one example—but it turns out we're *literally* sensitive, too. A recent consumer survey by MSW Research found 62 percent of the adult population claims to have sensitive skin on some part of their bodies.

Before your imagination goes into overdrive, know that all sorts of environmental factors can affect the way your skin looks and feels—and even how it repairs itself.

Here are some of the pros' simple ways to protect and nurture your skin without spending a fortune on expensive products:

Keep your home clean. Most people don't realize it, but dust can actually clog your pores, leading to blemishes and irritations. A good weekly vacuuming should be high on your to-do list.

Respect the elements. We won't bore you with how the sun's ultraviolet rays slip through the clouds even in winter and reflect off snow and ice. But experts like Dr. Sandra I. Read, instructor of dermatology at Georgetown University School of Medicine, do agree that's a compelling reason to wear sunscreen "with an SPF of at least 15" year-round. Another reason: avoiding windburn. Exposure to cold, harsh winds can remove cells from the skin's upper layer, leaving it cracked and dry. (Try some lip balm before heading outdoors.)

Know your skin type. You'd be surprised how many dollars are wasted just because people are confused over whether they have dry, delicate, oily or combination skin. So before you make the same costly error—and break one of the cardinal rules of proper skin care—determine which type you are by taking a quick and easy online quiz at CottonelleInstitute.com.

Quit smoking. The skin-damaging and aging effects of ciga-



Sixty-two percent of adults claimed to have sensitive skin on some part of their bodies.

rette smoke are second only to those of the sun, and yet increasing numbers of young people are lighting up to relieve stress. Keep it up, warns dermatologist Flor A. Mayoral, M.D., of the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine, and "deep-set wrinkles will appear around your mouth from puckering, your skin will be dehydrated and dull, and you may experience premature aging."

Avoid overheating your home. It tends to dry skin out. If you don't already own a humidifier, consider using at least part of the money you save on utilities to buy one to maintain air moisture.

You are what you eat. In the eternal quest for a healthy, radiant glow, what you put in your body is just as important as what you put on it. "A balanced diet rich in vitamins and antioxidants can make a real difference in the appearance of your skin," says Susan C. Taylor, M.D., clinical assistant professor of dermatology at Columbia's College of Physicians and Surgeons.

As for that survey, by far the most respondents (36 percent) cited the skin on their faces as most sensitive.