

11 Things Your Skin Is Trying To Tell You That You're Probably Not Paying Attention To

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When it comes to our skin, we usually pay the most attention to the aesthetic features, but our body's largest organ can also indicate a lot about our health. If you've noticed any changes or differences in your skin, there could be a number of things your skin is trying to tell you, and this could be anything from using the wrong products to underlying health conditions. Paying attention to your body's symptoms can help you get your health back on track — and who knows, it could also even help your skin look better in the process.

"In general skin rashes may be a sign of an infection or that the immune is dysregulated, or even a sign of some internal problem such as cancer," says dermatologist Delphine Lee, M.D., Ph.D. over email. "It is important to see your board certified dermatologist if you have a persistent rash to investigate the diagnosis and treatment, as well as consider if it may be a sign of another internal disease."

But rashes aren't the only indicator that something in your health could be wrong. Even the texture or color of your skin could signal that something in your body isn't right. If you are having some issues with your skin and you're not sure what they mean, consider these 11 things that your skin might be trying to tell you.

1. Dull, Dry Skin Could Mean You Need More Omega-3s In Your Diet

"If you have dull dry skin, it could mean that you have a deficiency in omega-3 fatty acids," says dermatologist Dr. Debbie Palmer over email. "They contribute to cell turnover (exfoliation) in the skin and in strengthening cell membranes." Omega-3 fatty acids are found primarily in

seafood, so consider upping your intake of fish such as salmon, tuna, sardines, and more.

2. Very Pale Skin Could Mean Anemia

If your skin is lighter than your usual hue, you may be anemic, as paleness is caused by reduced blood flow or a decreased number of red blood cells, according to Healthline. "You will also probably feel fatigued, short of breath, and have cold hands and feet," says dermatologist Dr. Debra Jaliman over email. "It's important to go to the doctor for a blood test and have a complete blood count. The most common cause is iron deficiency anemia."

3. Dark Spots Could Mean Sun Damage

"Dark spots, especially on the face and back of the hands, are most commonly a direct result of the sun's damaging ultraviolet rays," says dermatologist Fayne Frey, MD over email. "Avoiding direct sun exposure and applying sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher on a daily basis can minimize the development of these unwanted 'sun spots.'"

4. Excessive Facial Hair Could Mean A Hormonal Balance

"Excessive facial hair, especially on the upper lip and along the jawline, may indicate a hormonal imbalance as seen in polycystic ovarian syndrome or other hormonal imbalances," says Frey. Facial and body hair is normal, but excessive hair is usually coarse and dark and is a result of a high level of male hormones. The hair itself isn't dangerous, but the hormonal imbalance can cause other issue with your health, so see a doctor who can help diagnose you.

5. Itchy Skin Could Mean Skin Dryness

Itchy skin could be from a number of things, but it is most commonly due to cold air, too many hot showers, harsh soap usage, and lack of moisturizer application, says Frey. "It can also be a sign of eczema, thyroid disease, diabetes, or other internal medical conditions," she says. "Extreme itching may also be a sign of a superficial mite infection called scabies."

6. Very Dry Skin Could Mean A Thyroid Problem

"If your skin is very dry, you may have a thyroid problem," says Jaliman. "It may indicate an under active thyroid called hypothyroid, and a blood test will diagnose this. You may also experience hair loss."

7. Red Rashes On The Cheeks Could Be An Autoimmune Disease

Red rash on the cheeks in a butterfly distribution could be a sign of an autoimmune disease, in particular, lupus erythematosus, says Frey. In this disease, the body's immune system mistakenly attacks healthy tissue, according to Medline. However, a butterfly rash could also be due to a contact dermatitis from a topically applied cosmetic or skincare product.

8. Facial Flushing Could Mean Rosacea

Normal blushing is common, but if you experience a lot of facial flushing, it may be a result of a chronic skin condition called rosacea. "This is especially the case when associated with 'pimple-like' bumps on the cheeks," says Frey.

9. Yellow Bumps Could Mean Diabetes

High triglyceride levels could lead to yellow, waxy looking bumps on the skin, according to Prevention. It can also cause dark, velvety patches of skin on the back of your neck and arms.

10. Acne Could Mean Stress

Frequent breakouts could be caused by a number of things, but a very common one is stress. One study from Stanford found that college students had more acne flare-ups during exams, a period in which they reported more stress, compared to periods without testing.

11. A Burning Rash Could Be Shingles

"If you experience tingling or burning and a rash, it may be because of shingles," says Palmer. "It is caused by the same virus as chicken pox. The virus resides in sensory nerves and during times of stress, illness or compromised immunity it can reactivate causing a red, raised, blistering rash that is tender to the touch and in a linear pattern on the left or right side of the

body."

When in doubt, always go get your skin issue checked by a doctor or a dermatologist who can give you the most accurate diagnosis.

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