

WHAT CAUSES DRY SKIN ON MY FEET?

No matter where it is located, dry skin can be torturous. In addition to feeling rough and looking unsightly, dry skin can also itch, crack, flake, bleed, and cause severe pain and discomfort. Dry skin on the feet and heels is especially frustrating as you're forced to rub and walk on it on a daily basis. If you ignore the warning signs, you may be ignoring a more serious underlying condition. There are many possible causes of dry skin on the feet

Identifying Abnormally Harmful Dry Skin

It's no secret that your feet endure a lot of wear and tear on a daily basis. This stress causes the skin on the bottom of the feet to harden and form calluses, essentially to prevent the skin from eroding while you walk.

At the same time, this hardening tends to deplete moisture from the skin, result in layers of dead skin piling on top of one another, and cause the callused skin to tighten. As you walk, every time you put your heel down, the heel pad expands outward, to cover more surface area.

Unfortunately, the hard, tightened skin that is now surrounding the heel is not pliable enough to expand. The result? The dead skin rips, cracks, and tears.

Risk Factors for Dry Skin:

-**Dry skin** is generally caused by a lack of moisture in the air—an arid environment—and a build-up of dead skin cells. However, dry skin on the feet can be the result of the following:

-**Dehydration.** When you don't drink enough water, your blood doesn't flow as quickly through your body and your skin cells lose nutrients and moisture.

-**Use of harsh soaps.** Although many people believe that anti-bacterial soaps are good for the feet (and in some cases they are), they can also dry out the skin. When using anti-bacterial soap, you need to make sure it has a moisturizer in it, or be prepared to moisturize after you have washed your feet and legs.

-**Hot baths and showers.** Taking long, hot showers or baths can dry your skin. So can frequent swimming, particularly in heavily chlorinated pools.

-**Certain other skin conditions.** People with skin conditions like atopic dermatitis (eczema) or psoriasis—skin conditions marked by a rapid buildup of dead skin cells—are prone to dry skin.

-**Obesity.** Excess weight on the heels cannot only deplete blood supply and nutrients to the skin cells—causing them to die and stack on one another—it also encourages the heel to spread further with each step. Dry skin is unable to handle the added pressure and splits even further.

-**Diabetes.** Diabetes can cause neuropathy (nerve damage) in the feet and circulation problems, both of which can promote cracking skin in dry feet. Neuropathy can prevent persons with diabetes from feeling when they have dry feet, and thus keep them from treating it, while poor circulation can cause skin cells to lose moisture and nutrients.