

Beauty Sleep Counts When You Have a Cold

WebMD Feature: By Paige Axel, Reviewed By [Brunilda Nazario, MD](#)

The aches and pains that come with a cold can keep you from getting enough sleep, robbing your skin of its normal, healthy glow.

“Sleep is a very important time because it’s when the body and skin repair themselves,” says New York City dermatologist, Debra Jaliman, MD.

“If you don’t get adequate rest, the body produces a stress hormone called cortisol, and this can show in the skin,” says New York City dermatologist Ariel Ostad, MD.

Here are some tips for tackling the effects that cold-induced lack of sleep can have on your skin.

Defy Dark Circles

Congestion, lack of sleep, and feeling under the weather can make dark, puffy under-eye circles worse. Dilated blood vessels and congestion make the circles show up more.

Give your eyes a break. After drinking a cup of hot black tea to soothe your sore throat, cool the steeped tea bags in ice water and place them over your eyes. The cold and caffeine will constrict your blood vessels.

Fight Acne

A cough or fever keeps you from resting. That can cause stress, which prompts your skin to make more oil, leading to breakouts -- the last thing you want when you're already feeling low. Over-the-counter or prescription products with retinol can help keep acne under control, but they could worsen skin that's already red and raw.

No matter what your skin type, extra moisture is a good idea when you're fighting a cold. If you tend to break out, you may want to avoid heavy moisturizers. Look for oil-free formulas, especially those with ceramides. They're good for acne-prone skin without making blemishes worse.

Soothe Dry Skin

When you have a cold, your body is more prone to dryness. Cover the area beneath a red, chapped nose with petroleum jelly or use facial tissue with lotions that help soothe this area.

If your cold sets in when outside temps are low, your home's heater can make already dry skin worse. Use a humidifier to add moisture to the air. Not only can it help your skin, Ostad says, it may also ease nighttime congestion.

Repair Cracked Hands and Feet

Give dry hands and feet a little extra TLC. Jaliman recommends slathering on cream, then slipping on gloves or socks to help moisture penetrate.

For best results, Ostad suggests covering your feet with plastic bags before putting on the socks.

Heal Chapped Lips

"Always apply lip balm before you go to sleep," Jaliman says. Opt for balms without fragrance or artificial flavors -- they may tempt you to lick your lips.

She also says to steer clear of products with beeswax, because the wax sits on the surface of the lips and doesn't add moisture. And she advises against camphor and menthol, which can also be drying. Look instead for products with wheat germ; almond, jojoba, or coconut oils; aloe vera; or shea butter.

Prevent Wrinkles

When you have a cold, your body uses moisture to make mucus, which could leave your skin drier than usual. Dry skin can also make fine lines and wrinkles look worse.

While you get over your cold, it's the perfect time to treat your skin to a moisturizing mask. Just be mindful of any areas that have been irritated by repeated nose-blowing.

In addition to extra moisturizer, Jaliman suggests sleeping on satin pillowcases because they allow your face to slide, which prevents sleep creases. "If you can teach yourself to sleep on your back, that's even better because then you don't put any pressure on your face."

SOURCES:

Ariel Ostad, MD; assistant clinical professor of dermatology, New York University Medical Center; New York.

Debra Jaliman, MD, spokesperson, American Academy of Dermatology, New York.

Jeannette Graf, MD, assistant clinical professor of dermatology, Mount Sinai Medical Center, Great Neck, NY.

Reviewed on October 21, 2013

© 2013 WebMD, LLC. All rights reserved.

<http://www.webmd.com/cold-and-flu/features/beauty-rest>