



Sjögren's India

For Living Well with Sjögren's syndrome

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Patient Education Sheet

Dry Skin in Sjögren's syndrome (SS)

Dry skin needs more attention as a major feature of Sjögren's syndrome (SS). It can occur in the form of itching, redness, scaling and cracking of skin. Dry skin occurs as a result of immune dysfunction and destruction of moisture producing structures such as hair, oil and sweat glands. Once destroyed these oil and sweat glands cannot be restored. Although Dry skin occurs throughout the year the symptoms worsen during winters. The arms, legs and waistline are worst affected areas of the body.

- Drink adequate water in order to remain well hydrated.
- Take short baths/showers with warm water not more than twice a day. Avoid hot water as it tends to remove skin oils.
- Use mild or moisturizing bars e.g. those containing glycerin *Cocoa butter* or aloe vera.
- Do not use gram flour (*besan*), oats or facial scrubs.
- Pat yourself dry with a towel after a bath and gently apply a thin layer of moisturizer. Avoid rubbing vigorously (*maalish*).
- Groundnut oil and coconut oil are found to be effective moisturizers in summer. Petroleum jelly, sesame/cotton seed or castor oil (refined oil is also available) are effective in winter. Several moisturizers are also available in the market.
- Always take a shower after swimming and apply a moisturizer immediately.
- Preferably wear long sleeved cotton clothes. In winter you could wear several layers to keep out the cold.
- Cover the skin to protect it from harsh winds when doing any outdoor activity.
- Use cotton/satin covers for woolen or synthetic blankets or use an additional cotton sheet next to the skin.

- Remain indoors when it is very cold and windy.
- Sit or walk in the sun for a short while every morning in order to help the body produce Vitamin D.
- Some patients may experience darkening of the skin due to medicines such as Hydroxychloroquine. This is reversible if the medicine is discontinued.
- Patients who experience finger tips and toes turning alternately white, blue and red when exposed to cold should take care to keep their hands and feet warm.
- Those who experience skin rashes (usually over lower limbs), should avoid standing for long periods. Please consult your doctor if the problem persists. Avoid using fabric softeners for your clothes.
- You may use coolers, air conditioners, Electric Heaters or *sigris* in order to maintain an ambient temperature of 30-35 degrees C which is ideal for the skin.
- Use humidifiers or keep an open vessel filled with water in the room, to reduce the dryness in an air conditioned room.
- Use cotton carpets or '*chattai*' on the floors during winter.
- Use wooden shutters instead of glass on windows and wooden/PVC flooring wherever possible. This helps in retaining skin moisture during winters.

Please make multiple copies of this sheet and give to SS patients.

For more information on Sjögren's syndrome (SS), visit website www.sjogrensindia.org

Contact Sjögren's India on e-mail @ sspatientgroup.india@gmail.com

Become a member of Sjögren's India TODAY!!

Write to us at:

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