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# Skintensive Care

Winter can be hard on your child's delicate little hide, so take extra precautions like applying sunscreen (yep, sunburn can still happen in the cold) and dressing properly to keep exposed skin to a minimum. Below, Ira Skolnik, M.D., a pediatric dermatologist in Concord, MA, reveals how to handle the rough spots.

**+ Dry skin:** Bathe with gentle, scent-free soaps and avoid scrubbing. If skin is itchy, a colloidal-oatmeal bath such as Aveeno is a great soother. After baths, pat your child's skin dry instead of wiping it, which can be irritating (tell older kids to follow this rule, too). Moisturize often with whatever cream, jelly, or lotion your pediatrician recommends.

**+ Chapping:** Prevent it by applying a barrier of petroleum jelly (after sunscreen) on any exposed areas of the face before your child goes outside. Apply moisturizer often when indoors and consider getting your child a face mask for outdoor play if it's a frequent problem.

**+ Fingertip and toe splits:** Little digits can crack when the air turns cold and dry, especially the fingers of your child's dominant hand (if she has one yet), since they experience the most friction. Most pediatricians recommend applying an emollient cream or petroleum jelly frequently, especially after hand washing. If you think your child is old enough to tolerate it, moisturize her hands just before bed and then slip on a pair of white cotton gloves (available in a variety of sizes at [Allerderm.com](http://Allerderm.com)) so the cream really sinks in. Once the skin has healed, your doctor may recommend that you apply a liquid bandage every few days as a preventative, or when new fissures start to appear.

**+ Frostnip:** Caused by prolonged exposure to cold, this early precursor to frostbite usually first appears on exposed extremities, like the nose, fingertips, and toes. Watch for redness and feel for extreme coldness; your child may also complain that the area is numb or tingling. Head inside at once, and have him change out of any wet clothing, including socks. Take the chill off the problem spots by submerging them in water that's warm (but not scalding) to the touch.

