



Spotlight On Health

Your Skin Plays An Important Role!

What does your skin do that's so important? Your skin has a protective function as it holds everything in, plus has other functions as well. Our skin prevents us from getting infections and it contains cells that produce hair, sweat, oils and other substances that are important for our health and appearance.

Your skin makes up 12% of our body weight - so if you weigh 100 pounds, your skin weighs 12 pounds! If you weigh 50 pounds, your skin weighs 6 pounds.

Skin is an organ - in fact it is the largest organ that makes up our body. It regenerates (or renews) itself all through our life.

There are three layers that make up skin. The outer layer is called the epidermis. This layer varies in thickness. The soles of our feet or palms of our hands - areas that require more gripping power are the thickest. The thinnest layer is our eyelids as they need to be more flexible. In the middle of the epidermis is

melanocytes. The melanocytes determine the color of your skin. If you have a lot of melanocytes, your skin is darker.

The second layer of your skin is thicker than the epidermis. It is called the dermis. The dermis is made up of protein called collagen. It also contains nerve endings which help us feel things. When you touch something with your skin, the nerve endings send signals to your brain with information about what your skin has sensed. Like whether something is rough or soft or cold or hot. The dermis is where our sweat glands are - plus our hair follicles. Our hair follicles



are surrounded by a gland called sebaceous which makes our skin oily. In addition, the dermis has glands that give off the smell of our bodies.

The third layer is called the hypodermis. It is underneath the dermis. This layer contains the fat that is deep inside our skin. Besides the fat keeping us warm, it works as a shock absorber when we bump into things or fall. Another one of its jobs is that it stores energy for our body when we don't eat for a spell.

If some area of your skin is not working properly, skin rashes or itching or a "crawling feeling" may happen. If that ever happens to you - tell a responsible adult about it. It is important to take care of your skin.

As people age, skin changes. Collagen production is less, so people get wrinkles. They also can have drier skin. Older people can lose the layer of fat under the skin, making wrinkles worse and makes them feel colder.

One of the things that your skin also does it this! Everyone has a unique fingerprint. Your skin forms in such a way that no two people's fingerprints are alike! Try getting a washable ink pad and touching each of your fingertips on the ink, then pressing it on a piece of white paper gently. You will see your fingerprints are different than anyone else!

