

**teen**VOGUE

## "How can I save my sensitive skin?"

by Maura Lynch



To keep redness at bay, choose products that are free from common aggressors: soap, alcohol, and fragrance.

It makes for a classic shade of nail polish and a killer dress, but one place you never want to see the color red is in your complexion. Basic breakouts aren't the only cause of redness and irritation, though—for many teens, sensitivity makes maintaining healthy skin an arduous task.

"Redness has a lot to do with the barrier of your skin," says New York City-based dermatologist Jody Alpert Levine, M.D. "Some people's barrier is not intact, so they tend to lose more water through their skin. This makes their skin more sensitive to breaking down, allowing products to penetrate deeper and create a reaction." Usually, these reactions manifest themselves through symptoms that range from mild redness to burnin, itching and full-blown rashes. When it comes to teens, Levine says they can be highly susceptible to sensitivity—if only for the number of products they test on their skin. This is especially true when it comes to acne treatments, which can often contain harsh acids. "The theory is that people become more sensitized by trying a lot of different products," says Levine. "But you should be under the care of a dermatologist instead of experimenting in the drugstore."

Your best bet is to choose products that are free from common aggressors: soap, alcohol, and fragrance. "Soap tends to disrupt the skin's barrier because it removes the lipids that are needed to maintain it," adds Levine. "This dries skin out, and dry skin gets irritated more easily." Even certain dyes are intolerable for some people. As attractive as that pretty, pink body wash may be, Levine says to skip it: "I always advise my most-sensitive clients to go for white or clear products." Also, because certain chemicals in sunscreens can be difficult for individuals with sensitive skin to tolerate, opt for physical sun blockers, which prevent sun damage with ingredients like titanium dioxide or zinc oxide.

According to esthetician Joanna Vargas, owner of Joanna Vargas Skin Care in Manhattan, using skin-care products with soothing properties will also lessen your propensity toward irritation. "Chamomile, calendula, aloe, rose, and argan oil are all great for soothing, hydrating, and feeding the skin with the vital nutrients it needs to be healthy and glowing," she says. For a quick, skin-soothing treatment, she recommends starting in your kitchen. "Brew some chamomile tea and compress the affected area with tea-soaked cotton squares, once the tea has cooled off. This will eliminate the burning sensation immediately," she notes. Then, Vargas recommends applying a layer of organic yogurt over the area, letting it sit for 20 minutes, and rinsing it off with the leftover tea. As she so smoothly puts it—"Your skin will be calm and the redness gone!"

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