

# IMAGE



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HEALTH, BEAUTY AND LIFESTYLE

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## BARBRA STREISAND

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♥ WHEN SNORING CAN SIGNIFY HEART TROUBLE

♥ THE REALITY AND RED TAPE OF ORGAN DONATIONS

♥ GOOD NUTRITION KEEPS YOUR HEART PUMPING





# PROTECT YOUR FEET TODAY FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

When Your **Dry Skin** May Not Be Just “Dry Skin”

THIS TIME OF YEAR, MANY PATIENTS COME IN WITH DRY, FLAKING SKIN THAT JUST WON'T GO AWAY

**N**ow that flip flops are a distant memory and next summer feels like light years away, we all tend to neglect our feet. We tuck them away in big fluffy boots to hibernate all winter long. This time of year, as the temperatures drop and the air dries out, so does our skin.

During the winter, we see many patients start coming in complaining about dry, flaking skin that just won't go away. People try lotion after lotion, some even quite expensive, to try and alleviate the problem unsuccessfully. What people don't realize is that sometimes it's not just a simply a case of dry skin.

Xerosis is the medical term for dry skin and can be very itchy, irritating, painful and unsightly. Many times it will not respond to over-the-counter lotions and might require more involved treatment. Severe and chronically dry feet can be linked to a more serious underlying condition or disease. Evaluation by a podiatrist can help rule out these types of conditions and, if necessary, guide

you towards appropriate testing or specialists. However, in most cases, xerosis is a localized and self-limiting condition that is very successfully treated with prescription medications that actually chemically remove the dry skin.

In some cases, patients can also develop cracks or fissures in the skin which can be extremely painful and can lead to more serious issues like bleeding and infection. If you notice these, you should call a podiatrist and be evaluated as soon as possible. When this occurs, intervention is required to remove the dead calused skin and medications may be required to prevent infection and help the skin heal. If you notice redness, swelling, drainage or pus, this can be serious and should be treated as an emergency.

So, how can you prevent this terrible problem? Well, first thing is to keep moisturized. Using a good lotion nightly before bed is a great way for most people to keep their feet healthy and smooth. A pumice stone is also a simple and effective way to remove those dead skin cells and keep the rest supple and clear. Wearing proper socks during the day is also important in the winter. Cotton socks in heavy boots can pool sweat and create problems as well, so a

blended material that wicks moisture is usually advisable.

The best thing to do is have your doctor take a look at your feet and make recommendations for a course of care that will keep you healthy all winter long. It is always easier to maintain your feet year-round rather than waiting

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until summertime and then attempting to resolve problems like dry cracked feet. Even though it's cold and snowy outside, and you likely won't be parading around in open-toed shoes anytime soon, taking care of your feet is important all year! **IMAGE**

*Dr. Evan A. Vieira practices at Associated Podiatrists, with offices in Roslyn, Huntington, and Connecticut. For more information, visit [www.greatfootcare.com](http://www.greatfootcare.com).*