A close-up photograph of human skin, showing a nose and lips. The skin has a visible redness and irritation, particularly around the nose and mouth. The text is overlaid on the skin.

THE STATE OF
SKIN
SENSITIVITY

Aveeno
HEALTHY. IT'S OUR NATURE.™

THE STRENGTH OF SKIN SENSITIVITY

As humans, it's our nature to be sensitive.
Yet that sensitivity is often overlooked or misunderstood.

All skin goes through sensitive.
Sensitive isn't a skin type. It's a skin state.

Dry skin, hormonal skin, sunburned and razor burned, red,
aging or eczema prone – it's all sensitive.

At Aveeno®, we don't shy away from sensitivity.
It's natural, and we treat it that way.

Aveeno
HEALTHY. IT'S OUR NATURE.™

71% OF ADULTS say they have sensitive skin.^{1,2}

Sensitive skin is common, affecting a reported 71% of adults.^{1,2} But “sensitive skin” is not a clinical diagnosis by itself. It can encompass a range of skin issues from a reaction to external environmental stressors, a product or ingredient, to a symptom of an underlying skin disease.

While the idea of sensitive skin is much debated in skin care circles, the number of people who self-declare they have sensitive skin has increased a whopping 55% in just two decades.^{3,4} Is it our environment, genetics, the products we use, or are we just (thanks to internet searching) getting smarter and more self-aware in our attitudes toward self-reported skin sensitivity?

**The number of people
who self-declare they have
sensitive skin has increased
55% in just two decades.^{3,4}**

Most of us are presented with millions of stimuli each day. Our skin is both a receiver and a reactor to these stimuli, reflecting our emotional and physical well-being. As a result, what we think, feel and see may all play a significant role in what shows up on our skin.

In this report, we'll explore the elusive connection between our mind and our skin through a closer look at the prevalence and causes of sensitive skin. We'll reveal breakthrough research on how consumers perceive their sensitive skin and the importance of skin care for overall health and wellbeing with practical tips for living with sensitive skin.

We know that sensitive skin is real and can have a tremendous impact on quality of life. We are committed to science and research that harnesses the power of a selection of nature's ingredients in formulas that care for sensitive skin—dry, itchy, eczematic, even the often-distressed skin of oncology patients. As a leader in skin science, Aveeno® brings these select ingredients together in formulations proven to soothe, help heal and protect dry, sensitive skin and improve quality of life.

Aveeno®

OVERVIEW OF SENSITIVE SKIN



71% of adults say they have sensitive skin.^{1,2}

Experts describe sensitive skin as “*unpleasant sensory responses to stimuli that should not provoke such sensations*”.⁵ For many, these unpleasant sensations cannot be explained by visible symptoms or a skin disease, and the subjective nature of the condition makes it more difficult to diagnose and treat.^{1,5}

Though differences in how people perceive skin sensitivity exist, most say they have sensory effects, such as itching, burning, stinging, tightness and dryness.²

Over the past two decades, surveys on sensitive skin have been conducted in over 20 different countries on 5 continents.² A recent review of published literature showed the proportion of individuals with self-reported sensitive skin to some degree was 71% in the general population.^{1,6}

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS:⁷

- Sensitive skin is equally common across all ethnicities.
- Women are more likely to report sensitive skin than men.
- Younger age groups report higher rates of sensitive skin.
- More of Fitzpatrick phototypes I & III report having sensitive skin than having non-sensitive skin and phototypes IV, V, and VI more frequently identify as having non-sensitive skin.*
- Current smokers more frequently identify as having sensitive skin, whereas more non-smokers report having non-sensitive skin.
- Having pre-existing skin conditions is more likely to also lead to self-reported skin sensitivity.

Environmental factors are reported to affect sensitive skin more frequently than the use of products.² Though only 50% of sensitive skin subjects say they encounter discomfort when using a new cosmetic product, 78% of them avoid certain kinds of cosmetics.²

While research has shown there is little difference between ethnic groups in terms of sensitive skin prevalence, there are differences between ethnic subgroups in skin reactivity:⁸

- Euro-Americans had a more intense reaction to wind and tended to be less reactive to cosmetics.
- African-Americans were less reactive to most environmental factors and had a lower frequency of recurring facial redness.
- Asians appeared to have a stronger reaction to spicy food, to sudden changes in temperature and to wind, and tended to suffer from itching more frequently.
- Hispanics showed a lower incidence of skin reactivity to alcohol.

**Fitzpatrick skin typing is a way of classifying skin types based on risk of sunburn and skin cancer.*

WHAT CAUSES SENSITIVE SKIN?



It's believed to be the result of a decrease in the "skin's threshold."

Though the causes of sensitive skin are not fully understood, it is believed to be the result of a decrease in the "skin's threshold," not directly related to any immunological or allergic mechanism. Individuals with sensitive skin may have heightened neurosensory input, enhanced immune responsiveness, and/or diminished barrier function.²

As our body's largest and most visible organ, our skin serves to protect everything inside from everything outside, trapping moisture in while keeping allergens, irritants and pollutants out. The healthy functioning of the skin barrier depends on lipids (skin's natural fats) that help maintain its strength. In people with sensitive skin, this barrier is typically weaker, thinner, and more easily damaged.² A weakened barrier allows irritants and allergens to penetrate and much needed water to escape.

Due to the wide variety of sensory symptoms, such as burning, tingling, stinging, pain and itching, it is highly likely that neurosensory dysfunction could also be one of the mechanisms of sensitive skin. An impaired skin barrier may fail to adequately protect nerve endings resulting in heightened sensations to external stimuli that contribute to these symptoms.^{2,9}

Triggering factors for sensitive skin can be physical (UV, heat, cold, and wind); chemical (cosmetics, soaps, water, and pollutants), psychological (stress) or hormonal (menstrual cycle).⁴

COSMETIC INTOLERANCE

Cosmetic products like soaps, lotions and makeup can trigger allergic reactions in some people. Common allergens include: natural rubber, fragrances, preservatives, dyes, and metals. Symptoms can range from simple rashes to more severe allergic reactions.

STRESS AND SENSITIVE SKIN

Stress is an inevitable part of life and arises when we are under mental, physical, or emotional pressure that we perceive exceeds our ability to adapt to it.

The skin is particularly sensitive to the effects of stress, acting as both a receiver and a reactor to stimuli.¹⁰ When we're embarrassed, our cheeks turn red. If we're afraid, our skin goes pale.

**So essentially, what we think, feel and see may
all play a significant role in what shows up on our skin.**

Sustained stress can exert negative effects on the skin, as well as exacerbate a number of skin conditions. When we feel stressed:¹⁰

- The stress hormone cortisol can cause an overproduction of sebum (oil) in the skin, which may lead to acne breakouts.
- Stress impacts the immune system, causing the skin to be more reactive and sensitive, and triggers rashes, hives, and redness.
- Stress can exacerbate existing inflammatory skin conditions like eczema, psoriasis, and rosacea, leading to flare ups.
- Stress may cause us to feel nervous or anxious, and pick at scabs or acne, or scratch our skin, resulting in a self-perpetuating cycle.

As a consequence, stress hormones negatively affect the skin barrier by decreasing epidermal lipids and structural proteins, decreasing stratum corneum hydration and increasing transepidermal water loss resulting in a delay in skin healing, repair and restoration processes.¹⁰



THE MIND-SKIN CONNECTION

The interconnection between mental health and skin health is known as the mind-skin connection.

Our mind and skin are linked from before birth, stemming from the same embryologic tissue which is also closely linked to our central nervous system.¹³ So as emotions are played out neurologically, they are often expressed through the skin. The interconnection between mental health and skin health is known as the mind-skin connection - an interplay of neurologic, endocrine, immune, and cutaneous systems.¹³

Thoughts, feelings and emotions create instant chemical reactions in our bodies. Inflammation is the body's normal, protective response. Anything that triggers an inflammatory response in the body can cause inflammation in the skin—which can aggravate many skin conditions, including acne, rosacea, and eczema.¹⁰ On the flip side, common skin conditions can also have significant psychological impact—from lower self-esteem to depression.^{14,15}

1 / 3 OF ALL dermatology patients have emotional disorders.¹⁶

It is estimated that one-third of patients with skin diseases have psychological or psychiatric disorders.¹⁶ These skin diseases include acne, atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, and rosacea. From the moment of diagnosis, patients are faced with acceptance of their condition and adjustment to treatment. These skin conditions can cause a range of emotions, from depression over the change of their health, to anxiety that their symptoms will worsen, to anger (why me?).¹⁶ In what can become a vicious cycle, stress, depression and other psychological problems can intensify their skin condition.¹⁶

Rosacea is a common chronic but treatable skin condition that primarily affects the central face, and is often characterized by flare-ups and remissions. It typically begins after age 30 as flushing or redness on the cheeks, nose, chin or forehead that may come and go.¹⁷

In surveys by the National Rosacea Society, more than 90% of rosacea patients said their condition had lowered their self-confidence and self-esteem, and 41% reported that it had caused them to avoid public contact or cancel social engagements. Among rosacea patients with severe symptoms, 88% said the disorder had adversely affected their professional interactions, and 51% said they had even missed work because of their condition.¹⁸

Rosacea patients report a wide range of negative feelings:¹⁸

- frustration (76%)
- anxiety (54%)
- depression (43%)
- anger (34%)

**90% of rosacea
patients said their
condition had lowered
their self-confidence
and self-esteem.**

Psoriasis is a chronic skin disease affecting about 2% of people worldwide, causing red, itchy scaly patches, most commonly on the knees, elbows, trunk and scalp.¹⁹ Psoriasis is the skin disease most commonly associated with psychological stress, considered to be a trigger in over 50% of cases.²⁰ Psychological and social factors play an important role in the onset, maintenance, and exacerbation of this skin condition in up to 80% of patients.¹⁶

Psoriasis is the skin disease most commonly associated with psychological stress.

Acne vulgaris (or simply acne) is not considered a sensitive skin condition, but is a very common skin disease affecting a majority of the population at some point in their lifetime. Acne is the leading cause for visits to a dermatologist.²¹

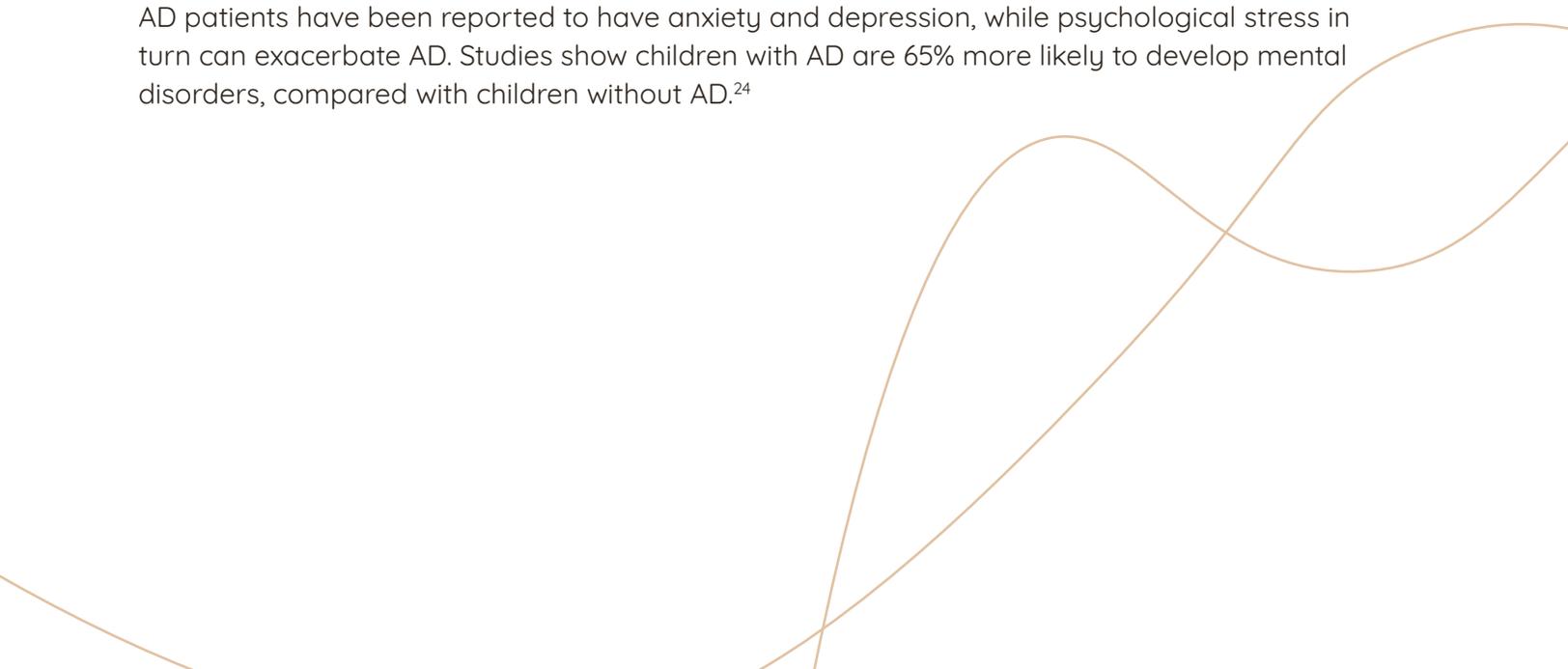
**Acne patients have a
63% increased risk
of developing depression.**

Acne lesions have the propensity to not only cause physical scarring, but also significant psychosocial impairment. Acne sufferers often experience self-consciousness, frustration, and embarrassment, and report the same levels of social, psychological, and emotional problems as patients with other chronic disabling conditions, including asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, back pain, and arthritis. In the first year following an acne diagnosis, patients have a 63% increased risk of developing depression compared to patients who do not have acne.²¹

Atopic dermatitis (AD) is a chronic and relapsing inflammatory skin disease that affects up to 20% of children and 10% of adults worldwide.²²⁻²³ AD has the highest disease burden among skin diseases with 91% of patients experiencing itching on a daily basis.²³

Studies show children with AD are 65% more likely to develop mental disorders.²⁴

Similar to psoriasis, AD symptoms and psychological stress seem to form a vicious cycle. AD patients have been reported to have anxiety and depression, while psychological stress in turn can exacerbate AD. Studies show children with AD are 65% more likely to develop mental disorders, compared with children without AD.²⁴





A CLOSER LOOK AT HOW ATOPIC DERMATITIS IMPACTS QUALITY OF LIFE

Eczema impacts nearly every aspect of a person's life.

Dealing with eczema can take its toll. In fact, research shows atopic dermatitis (the most common type of eczema) is associated with a lower quality of life than a number of other common chronic illnesses, including heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure.²⁵ Atopic dermatitis (AD) is a complex disease with a spectrum of symptoms and comorbidities. Beyond the constant itch and pain, eczema impacts nearly every aspect of a person's life, causing stigmas that may be as burdensome as the condition itself.²⁵

50% OF ADULTS with moderate to severe AD say it significantly limits their lifestyle.²⁵

Half of adults with moderate to severe AD say that it significantly limits their lifestyle impacting emotional and mental health, physical activity social functioning, sleep disturbance, work productivity, leisure activities, and family relationships.²⁵ Patients with AD are 3 times more likely to suffer anxiety and depression and >55% don't think their disease is under control.²⁵

Impact on Quality of Life:²⁶

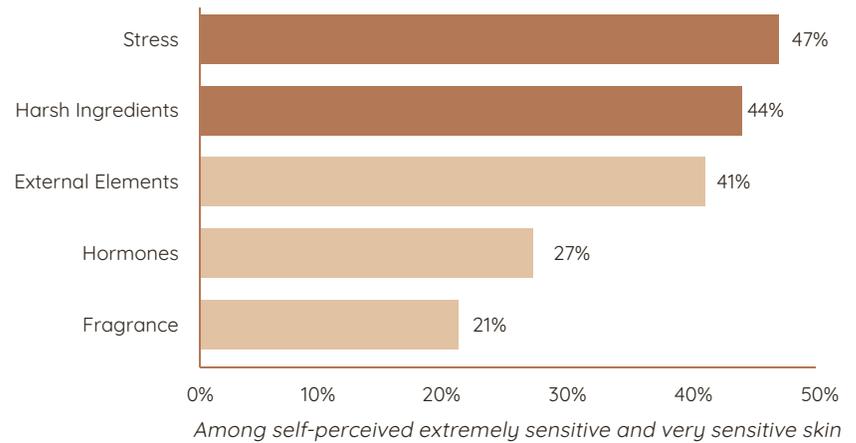
- On average, 86% of AD patients avoid at least one type of everyday activity while in flare.
- On average, 55% of AD patients are either always or sometimes worried about the next flare of AD.
- Nearly 40% of adults with eczema turned down a job or educational opportunity due to their eczema.
- Adults with AD are 2.24 times more likely to suffer moderate depression and 5.64 times more likely to be severely depressed compared to adults without the disease.
- 74% of parents describing a burden of extra care arising from their child's AD; 71% of parents feeling psychological pressures including guilt, exhaustion, frustration, resentment and helplessness, and 64% of parents having their sleep disturbed by night-time itching and scratching of their child.
- Sleep disturbance occurs in approximately 60% of children with AD, and parents of children with AD are more likely to average less than six hours of sleep per night compared with caregivers of healthy children.
- Psychotherapy is indicated in approximately 20% of AD patients.²⁷

NEW RESEARCH REVEALS HOW CONSUMERS PERCEIVE THEIR SENSITIVE SKIN AND THEIR PREFERENCES FOR TREATMENT²⁸

For decades, Aveeno® scientists have researched sensitive skin states and developed formulations that are efficacious and aesthetically preferred to meet the needs of sensitive skin consumers. To expand their holistic understanding, an online survey of 1000 participants (800 females, 200 males, aged 18-65) was conducted among self-declared sensitive skin consumers of varying ethnicities. Data captured included the prevalence of sensitive skin, how their level of sensitivity evolved as they aged, what skin conditions respondents had been diagnosed with, their triggers and the associated symptoms they experienced.²⁸

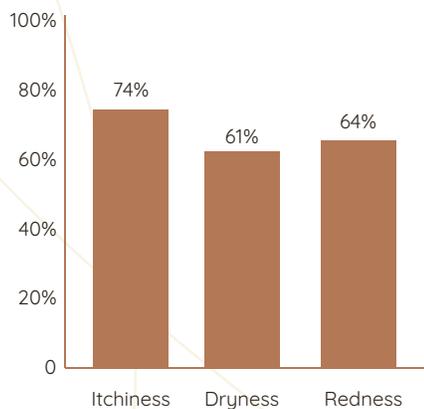
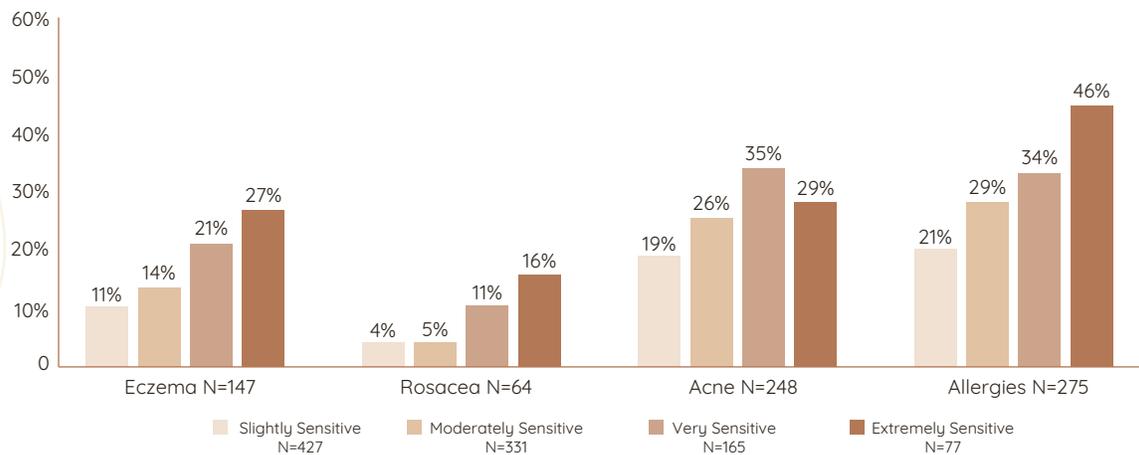
RESULTS:

Consumers believe stress and ingredients are the cause of the majority of skin reactions.²⁸



Having pre-existing dermatological conditions and a history of atopy (genetic tendency toward allergies and atopic dermatitis) is more likely to also lead to self-reported skin sensitivity.²⁸

Those who identified as extremely sensitive were ~200% more likely to have been diagnosed with eczema, rosacea, acne, or allergies than those who identified as slightly sensitive.²⁸



Itch is the most commonly reported symptom of sensitive skin, followed by redness and dryness.²⁸

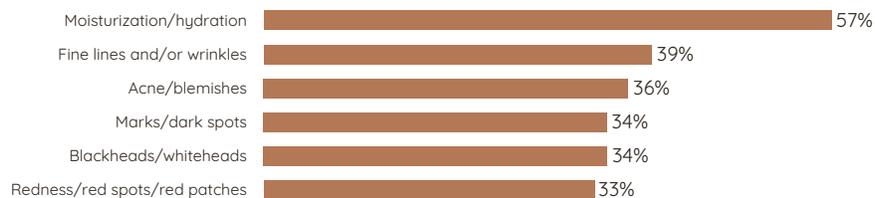
79% of consumers reported their sensitive skin either remained constant, or worsened over time.²⁸

WHAT CONSUMERS WANT

As much as the symptoms and causes of sensitive skin can vary, so do product preferences and benefits sought by consumers.

While it's important to help consumers identify which products are best to help relieve or prevent their sensitivity symptoms, adherence to a recommended regimen could also hinge on their preferences and priority product attributes.

Moisturization is the top concern for a product to remedy regardless of consumers degree of skin sensitivity.²⁸



The top three product attributes desired
when deciding which sensitive skin care product to purchase:²⁸



Free of harsh ingredients,
no harsh chemicals, no
artificial colors/scents

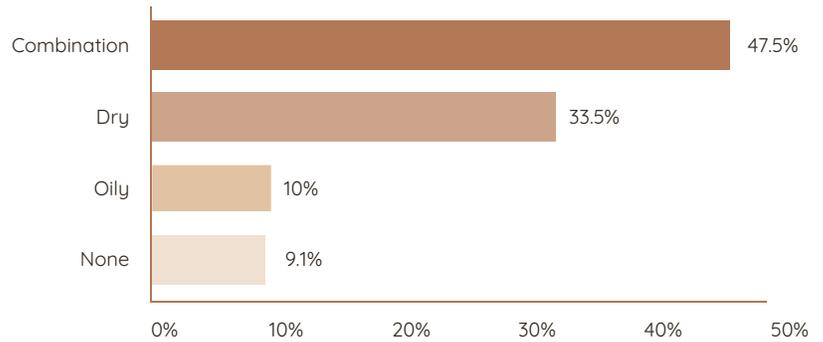
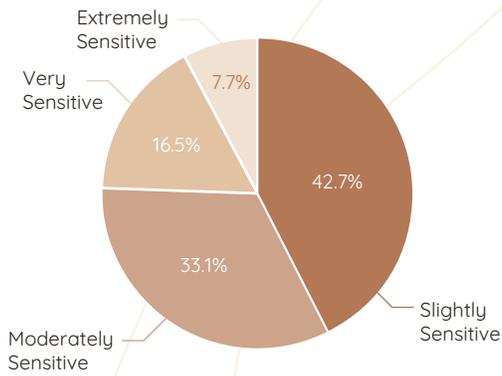


Leaves skin moisturized

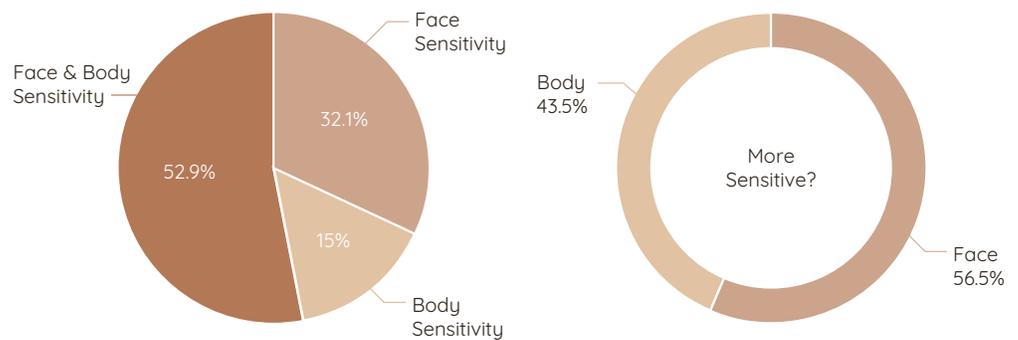


Is gentle /
non-irritating

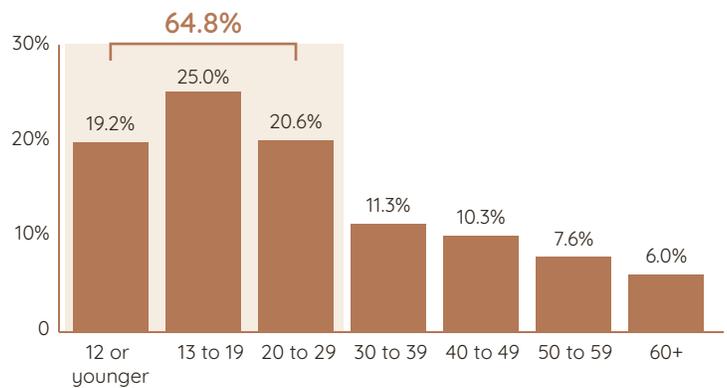
75% of sensitive skin respondents described themselves as having slightly sensitive or moderately sensitive skin and described their skin type as combination or dry skin.²⁸



Most respondents experienced both face & body sensitivity; with face being more sensitive.²⁸



65% of respondents discovered they had sensitive skin before the age of 30.²⁸





A SKINCARE ROUTINE IS GOOD FOR YOUR SKIN AND YOUR WELL BEING²⁹

Researchers have found that people who have less consistent routines throughout the active parts of their day are more likely to suffer from depression, mood problems, loneliness, and less happiness.³⁰

When our skin looks and feels good, we tend to feel better about ourselves. Self-care triggers the release of mood-boosting neurotransmitters in the brain.³¹ A skincare routine, like any other form of self-care, can be soothing and calming and give us a sense of control.²⁹

The act of caring for our skin also provides an opportunity for mindfulness. Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.³² This practice has been shown to buffer depression and anxiety by stopping worry and rumination.³³ By engaging in an activity for even a few minutes, we can help our brain disconnect from less healthy, negative patterns.

A gentle, but consistent skincare routine can help:²⁹



boost self-esteem



manage stress



increase confidence

Use of a gentle, moisturizing skincare routine with products containing colloidal oatmeal has also been shown to help replace lost moisture and restore the skin moisture barrier of sensitive, dry skin resulting in improvements in quality of life.³⁴

For those suffering from chronic skin conditions, a daily skincare routine may be essential to restoring moisture to help repair, protect and maintain a healthy skin moisture barrier. In atopic dermatitis, regular use of an over-the-counter moisturizer with colloidal oatmeal as part of a daily skincare routine can provide symptomatic relief, reduce prescription topical corticosteroid use and improve overall quality of life.³⁵⁻³⁹

HOW TO HELP SENSITIVE SKIN⁴⁰



Tips for people with sensitive skin from [Aveeno.com](https://www.aveeno.com):

1. Simplify your routine

For people with sensitive skin, the most effective care is often the simplest: cleansing, moisturizing, and applying a sunscreen for added protection. Keep up a good skin care routine every day, even if you're tired, and never go to bed without washing your face first!

2. Focus on your moisture barrier

Your skin is an incredibly effective and adaptable protective barrier, but harsh cleansers, and over-cleansing can compromise its resilience. For those with sensitive skin, maintaining a healthy moisture barrier is essential.

3. Avoid harsh cleansers

If there's a single phrase that sums up sensitive skin treatment, it's this: be gentle. Choose gentle cleansers and wash your face with tepid water instead of hot. Harsh cleansers can not only irritate your skin, but also damage your moisture barrier, over-drying or stripping away natural oils that your skin needs.

4. Keep showers short, cool, and effective

Sensitive skin doesn't exist only on your face — it's important to treat sensitive skin on your body gently, too.

A long, hot shower may feel great, but taking shorter showers (under ten minutes) with tepid water is much gentler on your skin. Avoid using loofahs or rough exfoliating brushes, which can irritate your skin. And don't forget to lock in the moisture after your shower with a hydrating body moisturizer.

5. Manage your stress

- **Exercise regularly.** Exercise releases hormones that will help improve your energy, mood and outlook. Consider walking, jogging, biking, gardening – anything that gets you active.
- **Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet** with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. Processed and sugar-laden foods can trigger inflammation in the body.
- **Get enough sleep.** Your body does its own best work while you are sleeping and sleep helps to mood, energy levels and cognition.
- **Meditate.** Meditation can instill a sense of calm, peace and balance that can benefit your overall health and well-being.
- **Try Yoga.** Through postures and controlled breathing exercises, yoga brings together physical and mental disciplines that can help you relax.

WHAT TO AVOID

Sensitive skin varies from person to person, but there are a few things that everyone with sensitive skin should avoid.



Sun

To combat the sun's harmful rays, the American Academy of Dermatology recommends wearing a Broad Spectrum SPF 30 sunscreen or higher. Mineral sunscreens like titanium dioxide and zinc oxide are often recommended for sensitive skin.



Fragrance

Fragrance can be a common sensitizing ingredient. Although fragrance looks like it's one ingredient on the label, it's more likely a blend of many ingredients. According to the National Eczema Association, between 1 and 4 percent of the population is sensitive to fragrance.⁴¹ For products that do not stay on your face long, such as a cleanser, avoiding fragrance is less important; but if you have sensitive skin, look for fragrance-free moisturizers and serums wherever possible.

INGREDIENTS TO LOOK FOR

The following ingredients are especially good for sensitive skin:



Feverfew extract

delivers high antioxidant and anti-irritant benefits, and significantly reduces the appearance of redness and irritation.



Oat

helps fight dry skin by maintaining the skin's moisture barrier, or stratum corneum, which keeps the good things in and the bad things out.

To help soothe, protect and strengthen the moisture barrier of your sensitive skin, 1) be gentle, 2) read ingredient lists, and 3) become bests friends with your sunscreen.

Above all, remember that sensitive skin is different for everyone, and what works for someone else may not work for you. It may take some experimenting to find the right combination of ingredients, products, and practices for happy, healthy-looking skin – but the results will be well worth the time and effort.

AVEENO® AND SKINSAFE™

Developed in partnership with the Mayo Clinic, SkinSAFE uses over 25 years of clinical skin testing data to help people with sensitive skin find the right products that are safe for their skin. It's the first-ever, clinically-driven ingredient-based recommendation platform that helps shoppers find products that work for sensitive skin.

Achieving the SkinSAFE Trusted Choice Seal requires formulas to pass a rigorous data review process that includes skin patch testing, clinical and home use testing on Sensitive Skin, limit or absence of the most common fragrance allergens, and purity of ingredient assessments.

SkinSAFE is free and accessible on skinsafeproducts.com, and through the SkinSAFE app.

WHY AVEENO?⁴²

OUR SKINCARE PHILOSOPHY

Using the power of a selection of natural ingredients, we provide beneficial and nourishing skincare for sensitive skin when it needs it most, while also committing to inclusive & sustainable practices. Our expertise in skincare allows us to recognize that sensitivity is a barometer for skin health. We seek to bring awareness to everyday skin sensitivities and reframes sensitive skin as both natural and manageable.

A POWERFUL BLEND OF NATURE & SCIENCE

The history of Aveeno is built upon our commitment to combine scientific research with selected ingredients found in nature. Our scientists unlock the power of a selection of natural ingredients to bring nourishing solutions to skincare so even the most sensitive skin feels soothed and moisturized.

SENSITIVE ISN'T A SKIN TYPE. IT'S A SKIN STATE.

Dry skin, hormonal skin, sunburned and razor burned skin, red, aging or eczema-prone – it's all sensitive and it's natural. When skin needs it most, Aveeno has everyday solutions made with effective ingredients in formulations proven to soothe, moisturize and help heal dry, sensitive skin.





THE AVEENO® COLLOIDAL OATMEAL DIFFERENCE

**Help restore,
nourish and
soothe the
skin's moisture
barrier.**

For generations, the moisturizing properties of colloidal oatmeal to help restore, nourish and soothe the skin's moisture barrier have been known to help compromised skin conditions such as atopic dermatitis. But not all emollients are alike.

The clinical benefits of colloidal oatmeal in atopic dermatitis have been demonstrated through extensive research across diverse patient populations and clinical applications. Colloidal oatmeal is the only single skin protectant OTC active ingredient that can claim to temporarily protect and help relieve minor skin irritation and itching due to eczema as recognized by the US FDA & Health Canada OTC Monographs.

Select Aveeno® products are formulated with colloidal oatmeal, which is rich in proteins, vitamins B and E, and nourishing lipids that help restore and strengthen the skin's moisture barrier, for healthy-looking skin.

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