



CHRONIC CONDITIONS AND SKIN HEALTH

Good skin health relies on maintaining good overall health throughout our lives. **When our immune systems are weak or when we are facing health problems, it is often written all over our skin.** Since we are more susceptible to developing health problems and chronic conditions like cancer, diabetes and heart disease as we age, the likelihood of developing skin complications also rises. If you or a loved one is struggling with any of these conditions, here's what you need to know:

Cancer

Skin side effects occur in many, if not most, cancer treatment cases.

- ☞ Some skin side effects are **critical enough to impact patients' ability to care for themselves or continue treatment.**
- ☞ The **most common skin side effects** of cancer treatments include pruritus, eczema, fissures, hand-foot syndrome, acneiform rash and folliculitis.

Diabetes

Skin infections are particularly common among people with diabetes, which becomes more prevalent with age. There are several harmful skin side effects:

- ☞ **Elevated glucose levels** intensify dermatologic problems such as severely dry and cracked skin.
- ☞ **Weakened immune systems** of diabetic patients may lead to increase the risk of infections of even small wounds.
- ☞ **Diabetic foot** is a condition that develops in the feet of people living with chronic diabetic nerve and vessel damage. Chronic, poorly healing and sometimes very painful ulcers may form from trauma of any severity and/or nerve damage. The condition can lead to increased falls and limited mobility in those affected.
- ☞ **Diabetic neuropathy**, or damage to nerve endings, makes it more difficult for people to feel when skin becomes damaged. This can lead to wounds that fester too long, making skin problems more resistant to treatment and often impossible to cure.

Heart and Blood Vessel Disease

People living with heart disease can face several complications that affect the skin.

- ☞ **Pain, numbness, weakness or coldness in the legs and arms** are a result of diabetic blood vessel disease and can often lead to many other skin problems, such as ulcers in the skin.
- ☞ Skin **discoloration** can occur that changes skin tone to pale gray or blue.
- ☞ Skin **rashes** or **unusual spots** may form.

Get Skin Health Smart at Active Aging Week for a Life Course of Healthy Skin!