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## SENIOR HEALTH

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# Skin Problems

### WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THEM

#### **DRYNESS**

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Dry skin can be caused by the loss of sweat and oil glands as you age. A good moisturizer should be applied daily. Protect your hands by using gloves for dish washing, gardening and other household chores. If itching persists, see your doctor.

#### **SHINGLES**

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This is a painful rash of red blisters, which eventually crusts over. Once the crusts fall off, the pain and rash may persist for one to six months, but the pain can last for years. Contact your doctor immediately if you think you have shingles, as it can lead to serious complications.

#### **LIVER SPOTS**

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Also known as age spots, these flat, light brown or black spots show up on the backs of your hands or face. They're common, harmless and frequently associated with overexposure to sunlight. To avoid liver spots, use a high-protection sunscreen lotion. There are over-the-counter skin-bleaching products that can lighten the spots.

#### **WRINKLES**

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Wrinkles are a natural part of the aging process as the skin becomes thinner, drier and less elastic. While there's no

cure for wrinkles, you can slow them down by avoiding tobacco smoke, overexposure to sunlight and by practicing good skin care.

#### **ECZEMA**

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This chronic skin condition often appears on the scalp, face, neck or creases of the elbows, wrists and knees. Small blisters and crusty scales on the skin are often accompanied by inflammation. Asthma has been associated with this skin condition. Eczema is a lifelong but manageable problem. Bathe frequently or take quick showers using warm (not hot) water and mild soap. Avoid foods, chemicals or other allergens that irritate or worsen the eczema. Never scratch eczema; it only makes it worse and breaks the skin, possibly causing an infection.

#### **VASCULAR BLEEDING**

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Irregular, dark purple areas with clear-cut margins that appear most commonly on the forearms and hands are referred to as vascular bleeding. The blood leaks from the vessels into the surrounding tissue. Certain medications, such as steroids, can cause vascular bleeding. It's not always understood why vascular bleeding occurs, but it's rarely dangerous. If the discolored spots appear suddenly and are accompanied by pain or fever, see your doctor.