

## **Loving Your Skin**

### **By Kami McBride**

In one of the first herb classes I took almost twenty years ago with Rosemary Gladstar she said, "If it can't go in your mouth, don't put it on your skin. This teaching has been a guideline for me all of these years. When you apply something to your skin, it is digested by the skin and absorbed into the blood stream.

The skin is the largest organ in the body. It provides a protective barrier for the rest of the body and contributes to many important functions such as secretion, absorption, excretion, temperature regulation, immune function, and sensory perception. The skin has receptor sites that transfer information through the nervous system to the spinal chord and brain. The skin is the boundary between us and the rest of the world. Because of its millions of receptor sites it is a major player in how we perceive, experience, and interact with the world.

The skin is a major organ of elimination. It plays a key role in helping your body to eliminate toxins, heavy metals, and carcinogenic substances. For long term health and balanced de-toxification it is imperative to support your skin to do its job.

Allow your skin to breathe by wearing natural fiber clothing. Polyester and synthetic garments do not allow the skin to breathe and de-toxify. This is particularly important when it comes to the underclothes that you wear right next to your skin.

For healthy skin it is important to reduce your exposure to chemicals and synthetic ingredients in make up, lotions, deodorant and all of your skin care products. Avoid all products with mineral oil. Mineral oil is a by-product of the petroleum industry. It clogs the skin pores and leaves the skin susceptible to infection and inflammation. Also avoid harsh soaps and detergents. They strip the skin of its moisture barrier, increasing your risk to illness.

Since 1938 the FDA has granted self-regulation to the cosmetics industry. More than 25,000 chemicals are used in personal care products. Many chemicals that are not allowed in food production are used in personal care products. Read your labels! Fragrance as an ingredient is the cover word for more than two thousand chemicals. Everyday products such as Johnson and Johnson Talcum powder and Alberto VO5 hair conditioner are listed in the top 12 most toxic personal care products.

Estimates show that three personal care products are used daily on infants and children, men use ten personal care products, and women use six cosmetics and 13 personal care products each day. Assuming each product only contains two carcinogens, this results in daily exposures to six different avoidable carcinogens for infants and children, 20 for men, and 38 for women. This level of chemical exposure adds up and contributes to the disease process. To find out more about this issue, there are two good books: *The Safe Shoppers Bible* by Samuel Epstein and *What's in Your Cosmetics* by Aubrey Hampton.

Supporting skin metabolism is a great way to nourish the health of your skin. Dry brushing, exercise, massage, taking a mild sauna and bathing all help the skins' normal function. Using bath salts in your bath are also a great way to relax the body and help the skin de-toxify. Here are some great recipes. Bath salts are easy to make and you can add a cup or two to your evening bath. If you have dry skin, add one half cup of olive oil to your bath salt and then put it into your bath water. Many of these formulas are not recommended in pregnancy.

### **Basic Bath Salt Recipe**

2 cups sea salt  
One half cup baking soda or Epsom salts  
One half cup powdered dried herbs  
Ten to twenty drops of essential oil of choice  
Store salts in a dry place

### **Aches and Pains Bath Salts**

1 cup sea salt  
1 cup Epsom salt  
One quarter cup powdered arnica flowers  
One quarter cup powdered calendula flowers

### **Sleepy Time Bath Salts**

2 cups sea salt  
One half cup Epsom salt  
One quarter cup powdered oatstraw  
One quarter cup powdered lavender  
One quarter cup powdered hops or skullcap  
Ten drops chamomile essential oil

### **Sore Joints Bath Salts**

2 cups sea salt  
1 cup Epsom salt  
One quarter cup baking soda  
One quarter cup powdered juniper berries  
One quarter cup powdered rosemary  
One eighth cup powdered mugwort  
Five powdered California bay leaves

### **Moon Time Bath Salts**

4 cups sea salt  
One half cup powdered milk  
One half cup powdered oatmeal  
One half cup powdered beet root  
One quarter cup powdered chamomile

### **Invigorating Bath Salts**

4 cups sea salt

One quarter cup powdered eucalyptus leaf  
One quarter cup powdered peppermint  
One quarter cup powdered rosemary

### **Summer Time Cooling Bath Salts**

4 cups sea salt  
One half cup peppermint  
One half cup lemongrass  
One quarter cup hibiscus

***Kami McBride*** has taught herbal medicine and women's health since 1988. She is the director of *Cultivating the Herbal Medicine Woman Within*, an experiential herbal studies program where women are inspired to reclaim their heritage as herbalists and healers. Kami is the author of *105 Ways to Celebrate Menstruation* that is available on [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) Kami teaches Women's Wisdom workshops for women to experience optimum health in relation to their body cycles. For a schedule of upcoming classes or for an herbal consultation Kami can be reached at (707) 446-1290 or sign up for her free herbal e-newsletter at: [www.livingawareness.com](http://www.livingawareness.com)