**The combined skin damaging effects of hard water and chlorine on our sensitive skin.**

**The combined effects of hard, chlorinated water on you and your family’s skin.**

Most people suffering from dry skin tell us they have tried nearly every cream, lotion, and moisturizer out there. Regardless of what they use or how often they use it, their dry skin will often persist. Many think dry skin is just something they have to live with. They may not have given much thought to a simple environmental factor like their water—the possibility that the water they bathe in, wash their dishes, clothes and linens in, and even drink may be contributing to the problem.

Hard water is a common culprit in the fight against dry skin, but many people don’t really know what hard water is. Others may have heard of it, but even some who think they may have it may not take the time to have their water tested to see how hard it actually is, or to find out what they can do about it.

Hard water is defined as highly alkaline water that contains high levels of iron, magnesium and/or calcium ions. pH is a logarithmic scale starting at 0 and going to 14. Zero is as acid as you can get and 14 is as alkaline as you can get. Seven is the ideal pH of water, and what we consider to be neutral. Each integer represents 10 times the previous one (i.e.: a pH of 6 is ten times as acidic as a pH of 7). The natural pH of the human body at a cellular level is around 7.3.

Remember, *water is the universal solvent*. When these minerals enter your water supply, they “harden” the water and make it difficult for *other* substances like detergents, soaps, or any sort of *solute* (something that dissolves in a solvent) to enter into solution.

Thus, you may see an increase in clogged plumbing; deposits of soap, iron, and lime in your showers, sinks, and faucets; difficulty getting soaps to lather and rinse off and out; and persistent dry flaky skin. These signs are all indicative of hard water.

**Hard, chlorinated water and your skin**

This build-up or “hardening” of minerals in hard water makes it very difficult for other substances to dissolve in that water, including soaps and detergents. The various undissolved substances can leave a surface residue on the washing machine, your clothing, your plumbing, tub, or shower—and your hair and skin. With that, bathing and washing our clothes in hard water can lead to increased skin irritation.

Whenever we bathe, we often lather ourselves up with soaps, shampoos, conditioners and other cosmetics and cleaning products. If your water is hard, you may notice these products aren’t lathering up sufficiently. This could prompt you to use more of the product. Next, we start the process of rinsing, which is where the combination of hard water and increased amounts of cleansing products can really work against us, and a more problematic residue of the hard water and cleaning products may be left on the skin.

The soap residue left behind on your skin clogs the pores and irritates the skin, making it itchy, flaky, and dry. The minerals in the hard water itself can also clog skin pores, which can be especially harmful to more sensitive skins.  Facial skin or other areas that are thin, reddened, or irritated from associated dry skin conditions may worsen, with flushing from damage to the blood vessels.

Hard water can be especially irritating to those who already suffer from a sensitized skin and inflammation of the skin, outbreaks are more common when one suffers from persistently dry skin. While hard water itself doesn’t cause dermatitis, it can irritate the condition or even initiate a flare-up.

**Chlorine strips the skin of its natural oils and causes it to dry and crack, which can lead to skin conditions such as eczema.**

Chlorine strips the skin of it’s natural oils and damages the skin cells, destroying the fluid balance, resulting in dried out, dead cells. This in turn leads to dry, peeling skin, which makes the surface of the skin appear reddened and shiny. Chlorine is harsh on your skin. It can dry it out very easily.  So the combination of hard water and chlorine in bathing water effects on the skin over time accumulate, ending up causing skin problems.

**Remedies for hard, chlorinated water**

The best remedy for hard, chlorinated water is to try and make it softer. And remove the chlorine.   Soft water is literally the opposite of hard water; it is water in its purest form—minus the mineral ions. Without the minerals, soft water rinses the soaps and detergents from our bodies and clothes much more efficiently.  Without the chlorine, our water doesn’t dry the skin out.  This leaves our pores unclogged, allowing moisture to be absorbed, and with softer, healthier s

