



SKIN

Did you know that a skin issue isn't always just about your skin? It could be a sign of an internal problem your doctor needs to know about and treat.

Several skin changes may indicate that you're at increased risk for cardiovascular disease (CVD)—heart attack, stroke. One is yellow plaque on the eyelids, usually the upper lids. Then there is swollen and itchy legs and feet. Swelling could be an indication of congestive heart failure, and if not treated itchy, red skin (stasis dermatitis) may occur. These skin issues are treatable with maybe drugs (better living through chemistry!), compression stockings, or topical ointments. Ask your doctor.

Blood sugar control (Diabetes) may show up as yellow-red bumps on the arms and legs. They're caused by very high levels of triglycerides which when treated and the levels return to normal, the skin lesions will go away. Diabetes is a serious disease which causes serious problems, so be alert for skin changes.

If you develop a "butterfly rash" which is a red rash across both cheeks in the shape of a butterfly's wing, you might have Lupus. This autoimmune disease attacks various tissues and organs, including the skin. Your doctor definitely needs to be a part of developing a plan to lessen the higher risk of heart disease, cancer, kidney or bone disease and infections that lupus can cause.

Thyroid disease has many symptoms (of which I have about all of them)! The biggies are dry skin and loss of eyebrow hair. I have about $\frac{1}{2}$ eyebrows. Then there is also the fun fatigue, muscle and joint pain, mental sluggishness, low libido (how would I know?), weight gain, cold hands and feet. A lot of women develop this after menopause (bonus), and they say if you get treatment the skin problems typically resolve (they don't).

So be gentle with your skin because it is your first barrier against almost everything else. Take care of it like your car...wash it, lube it, and keep an eye out for changes.