

The Layers of Human Skin

The skin is the body's largest organ. It protects the tissues beneath it, helps regulate temperature, provides sensation and supports immune defence. It is made up of three main layers, each with a distinct structure and function.

1. The Epidermis

The epidermis is the thin, outermost layer of the skin. It forms a protective, water-resistant barrier that helps prevent moisture loss and shields the body from bacteria, chemicals and ultraviolet radiation. It contains keratin-producing cells, pigment-producing melanocytes and immune cells. New cells are formed in the deeper part of the epidermis and gradually move towards the surface, where they are eventually shed.

2. The Dermis

The dermis lies beneath the epidermis and is considerably thicker. It contains collagen and elastin fibres, which give the skin strength, firmness and flexibility. The dermis also contains blood vessels, sensory nerves, hair follicles, sweat glands and sebaceous glands. Together, these structures help regulate body temperature, provide touch and pain sensation, nourish the skin and keep its surface naturally lubricated.

3. The Hypodermis

The hypodermis, also called the subcutaneous layer, is the deepest layer beneath the skin. It is made mainly of fatty tissue and connective tissue. It cushions the body, stores energy, reduces heat loss and attaches the skin to the muscles and tissues underneath. Its thickness varies between different parts of the body and between individuals.

Actions That Support Healthy Skin

- Eat a balanced diet rich in fruit, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats and good-quality protein.
- Drink enough water to support normal hydration.
- Protect the skin from excessive sunlight by using suitable clothing, shade and broad-spectrum sunscreen.
- Cleanse the skin gently and avoid harsh products that remove too much of its natural oil.
- Use a suitable moisturiser to help maintain the skin barrier and reduce dryness.
- Avoid smoking and limit excessive alcohol intake, as both can affect skin structure and appearance.
- Get adequate sleep, manage stress and remain physically active.
- Seek advice from a healthcare professional if a mole, rash, wound or other skin change is persistent, unusual or worsening.

Key message: Healthy skin depends on both external care and internal wellbeing. Daily protection, gentle skincare and a nutritious lifestyle all contribute to maintaining its structure and function.