

Kiss chapped lips goodbye this winter

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Dry and chapped lips are common during the winter, but there are a number of things you can do to protect them, an expert says.

"Cold, [dry weather](#); [sun damage](#); and frequently licking your lips are just some of the reasons your lips might feel dry and chapped this winter," dermatologist Dr. Noëlle Sherber said in an American Academy of Dermatology news release. "Understanding these causes and anything else that might trigger your chapped lips goes a long way in preventing and treating them."

Sherber offered the following advice on preventing and treating dry, chapped lips:

- **Use non-irritating lip products.** Stick to lip balms, lipsticks and other lip products that contain ingredients like castor seed oil, ceramides, dimethicone or mineral oil. Choose products that are labeled "fragrance-free" and "hypoallergenic."
- **Avoid harsh ingredients.** Camphor, menthol or eucalyptus can irritate your lips. If your lips burn, sting or tingle after using a lip product, stop using it.
- **Refresh often.** Apply your lip balm throughout the day and before you go to bed. If your lips are very dry and cracked, use a thick ointment, such as petroleum jelly. Ointment seals in moisture longer than waxes or oils.
- **Protect your lips outdoors.** Before going outside, apply a lip balm with an SPF of 30 or higher. Use a lip balm with [titanium dioxide](#) and/or [zinc oxide](#) and reapply it every two hours while outside.
- **Don't lick, bite or pick at your lips.** It may feel natural to lick your lips when they feel dry, but this can worsen the problem. Instead of licking your lips, apply a non-irritating lip balm.
- **Keep metal away from your mouth.** Don't hold metal items such as paperclips, jewelry and reusable metal straws with your lips. They can cause irritation.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of water and use a humidifier at home, especially in your bedroom while you sleep.

"Chapped lips are usually harmless, however, sometimes they can be a sign of a medical condition," Sherber said. "If your dry, chapped lips do not heal after following these tips for two to three weeks, talk to a board-certified dermatologist."

More information: The U.S. National Library of Medicine has more on [preventing chapped lips](#).

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