

REGENIQUE

Elegance

Your Complete Sensitive & Reactive Skin Ritual

*A step-by-step guide to calming, protecting, and
strengthening your most delicate skin.*

Timeless Beauty, Refined

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If your skin flushes at the slightest provocation, stings when you apply a new product, or seems perpetually in a state of calm and crisis, you are not alone. Sensitive and reactive skin is one of the most common dermatological conditions worldwide, affecting an estimated 60 to 70 percent of women and 50 to 60 percent of men. Yet it remains misunderstood.

The truth is this: sensitive skin is not a flaw to be corrected. It is a signal from your body, a sophisticated system telling you precisely what it needs. And when you learn to listen, to build a ritual rooted in good intention, the result is nothing short of transformative. You can reveal your most luminous complexion without compromising your comfort.

This guide will walk you through everything: the science behind sensitivity, a complete morning and evening treatment calendar, the ingredients your skin will love, and the ones it will thank you for avoiding. Whether your sensitivity is genetic or the result of a damaged barrier, this is your path back to calm, resilient, radiant skin.



Understanding Sensitive and Reactive Skin: The Science of Comfort

Sensitized vs. Truly Sensitive: An Important Distinction

Before we build your ritual, it is essential to understand the difference between **sensitized skin** and **truly sensitive skin** because the distinction shapes your entire approach.

Truly sensitive skin is a genetic predisposition. If you have always reacted easily to products, weather changes, or stress, and your family members share similar tendencies, your sensitivity is likely intrinsic. Conditions like rosacea and atopic dermatitis often fall into this category. Your skin barrier is constitutionally thinner, your nerve endings are more exposed, and your skin's natural oils are less effective at protecting it.

What Happens at the Cellular Level

Sensitive and reactive skin involves three interconnected biological processes:

1. A Compromised Skin Barrier. Your stratum corneum, the outermost layer of skin, functions like a brick wall. The "bricks" are corneocytes (dead skin cells), and the "mortar" is a precise blend of ceramides, cholesterol, and fatty acids. In sensitive skin, this mortar is insufficient. The barrier becomes porous, allowing irritants and allergens to penetrate while moisture escapes, a process called *transepidermal water loss* (TEWL). The result is skin that is irritated, and reactive.

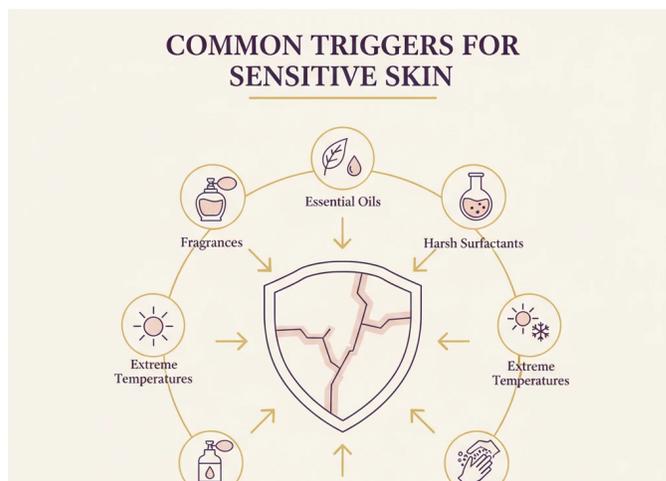
2. Heightened Sensory Nerve Endings. Research published in the *British Journal of Dermatology* shows that individuals with sensitive skin have a higher density of nerve fibers in the upper dermis, particularly those responsible for pain and itch perception. These nerve endings release neuropeptides like Substance P and calcitonin receptor gene-related peptide (CGRP), which amplify the sensation of stinging, burning, and tightness even when no visible inflammation is present.

3. An Overactive Inflammatory Cascade. When irritants breach the compromised barrier, keratinocytes in the epidermis release pro-inflammatory cytokines, including interleukin-1 alpha (IL-1 α), tumor necrosis factor (TNF- α), and interleukin-8 (IL-8). This triggers an inflammatory cascade that manifests as redness, swelling, and itching. In reactive skin, this cascade is triggered more easily and resolves more slowly than in resilient skin types.

How to Identify Sensitive and Reactive Skin

You likely have sensitive or reactive skin if you experience two or more of the following:

- Persistent or episodic redness, particularly across the cheeks, nose, and chin
- Stinging, burning, or tingling when applying skincare products
- Skin that reacts to temperature changes, wind, or humidity shifts
- Visible broken capillaries or a tendency toward rosacea
- Dryness and flaking that coexist with occasional breakouts
- A history of contact dermatitis or eczema
- Products that once worked well now causing irritation



Common Triggers to Avoid

Knowledge is your most powerful tool. These are the most frequently documented triggers for sensi

- **Fragrance** (both synthetic and natural): The single most common cause of contact dermatitis in cosmetics. Essential oils, which, despite their natural origin, contain potent allergens like linalool, limonene, and geraniol.
- **Drying alcohols** (alcohol denat, SD alcohol, isopropyl alcohol): These strip the barrier and increase irritation. Fatty alcohols like cetyl and cetearyl alcohol are gentle and actually beneficial.
- **Essential oils**: Lavender, tea tree, peppermint, and citrus oils are particularly problematic for their popularity in "clean beauty" formulations.
- **Over-exfoliation**: AHA and BHA acids used too frequently or at too-high concentrations are a leading cause of barrier damage on sensitized skin.
- **Extreme temperatures**: Very hot showers, saunas, and cold wind all compromise barrier integrity.
- **Stress and sleep deprivation**: Cortisol elevation increases inflammatory cytokine production and weakens the skin barrier.
- **Chemical sunscreen filters**: Oxybenzone, avobenzone, and octinoxate can trigger reactions. Mineral filters (zinc oxide, titanium dioxide) sit on the skin surface and are far better tolerated.

Your Morning Ritual: Calm, Protect, and Glow

The morning ritual for sensitive skin is about two things: maintaining the calm your skin achieved over a protective shield against the day ahead. Every step should feel like a gesture of care, never a source of irritation. If a product causes even mild tingling, set it aside. Your skin is communicating. Listen.



SENSITIVE SKIN RITUAL

MORNING	EVENING
 <p>1. Micellar Water or Cream Cleanser</p>	 <p>1. Gentle Oil Cleanse</p>
 <p>2. Calming Toner (rose water)</p>	 <p>2. Cream Cleanse</p>
 <p>3. Barrier-Repair Serum</p>	 <p>3. Gentle Treatment (alternate nights)</p>
 <p>4. Gentle Moisturizer with Ceramides (zinc oxide)</p>	 <p>5. Soothing Eye Cream</p>

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LUXURY SKINCARE

Alternatively, a fragrance-free cream cleanser with a milky texture can be massaged in with fingertips lukewarm (never hot) water. Look for formulas containing glycerin, squalane, or ceramides. Avoid any aggressively, as the surfactants responsible for that foam are often too stripping for reactive skin.

Step 2: Calming Toner or Mist

A hydrating mist serves a dual purpose: it replenishes moisture after cleansing and delivers calming skin. Rose water is a time-honored choice, with research supporting its anti-inflammatory and antio: Centella asiatica (cica) hydrosols are another excellent option, providing the soothing madecassoside compounds that accelerate barrier repair.

Hold the mist six to eight inches from your face, close your eyes, and spray in a gentle arc. Allow it to thirty seconds before proceeding. This moment of pause is part of the ritual: a breath, an intention, a for yourself.

We love the [PAAVANI Rose Water Facial Mist](#) for this step: organic, single-ingredient, and deeply cali

Step 3: Centella or Aloe-Based Serum

This is where targeted treatment begins. For sensitive skin, the goal is not aggressive correction but serum built around centella asiatica (cica) delivers four key compounds: madecassoside, asiaticoside asiatic acid. Together, these stimulate collagen synthesis, reduce inflammation, and strengthen the If cica serums are unavailable, an aloe vera-based serum with added hyaluronic acid provides excellent soothing. Apply three to four drops to clean, slightly damp skin and press gently with your palms. Ne

Step 4: Gentle Eye Cream

The periorbital area is the thinnest skin on the body, roughly 0.5 millimeters compared to 2 millimeters face. For sensitive skin, this area demands the most delicate formulations. Choose an eye cream free and fragrance. Peptides, caffeine (for puffiness), and ceramides are the safest actives for this zone.

Apply a pearl-sized amount using your ring finger (it exerts the least pressure) in a gentle tapping motion. Never drag or pull.

Step 5: Barrier-Repair Moisturizer

This is the cornerstone of your sensitive skin ritual. Your moisturizer must do more than hydrate; it must repair a compromised barrier. The gold standard formulation mimics the skin's natural lipid structure: a 3:1:1 **cholesterol, and free fatty acids.**

Look for products that also contain niacinamide (vitamin B3), which strengthens barrier function and panthenol (vitamin B5), which accelerates healing and provides deep hydration. Apply a generous amount and wait 30 seconds for absorption before sunscreen.

Step 6: Mineral SPF 30+ (Non-Negotiable)

Choose a formula rated SPF 30 or higher with broad-spectrum protection. Tinted mineral sunscreen option, as the iron oxides in the tint provide additional protection against visible light and blue light, trigger hyperpigmentation and inflammation in sensitive skin.

Apply as the final step of your morning ritual, and reapply every two hours if spending time outdoors

Your Evening Ritual: Repair, Restore, and Renew

The evening is when your skin transitions from defense to repair. Cellular turnover peaks between 11 and 2 AM, and barrier repair mechanisms are most active during sleep. Your evening ritual should support this natural process by removing the day's accumulation, delivering calming and reparative actives, and sealing everything in a protective layer.



Step 1: Micellar Water or Gentle Oil Cleanse

Begin by dissolving sunscreen, makeup, and environmental pollutants with an oil-based cleanser or cleansing balm. This works on the principle that like dissolves like: the oils in the cleanser bind to the oils in your makeup, lifting them away without disrupting the barrier.

Choose a fragrance-free cleansing oil or balm made with jojoba oil, squalane, or sunflower seed oil. Massage onto dry skin for sixty seconds, then emulsify with warm water and rinse. For micellar water, simply saturate a cotton pad until no residue transfers.

Step 2: Ultra-Gentle Cream Cleanse

Follow with a cream cleanser to remove any remaining residue. This double-cleanse method is essential because mineral sunscreen, being a physical filter, requires thorough removal.

However, if your skin is particularly reactive on a given evening, if you experienced a flare during the day, **skip this step entirely**. One cleanse is sufficient. Forcing a second cleanse on already-compromised skin is not good. Flexibility and responsiveness to your skin's daily needs are hallmarks of an intelligent ritual.

PHAs have a larger molecular size than AHAs, which means they penetrate more slowly and cause less irritation while still providing effective exfoliation. Fruit enzymes work by dissolving the protein bonds between dead skin cells, while PHAs chemically peel them, a gentler mechanism of action.

Apply your chosen exfoliant once per week only, on a designated evening (we recommend Thursday or Friday as the recommended time (usually five to ten minutes), then rinse with cool water. If any tingling occurs, less is not better. Consistency at a gentle pace always outperforms intensity.

Step 4: Calming Treatment Serum

Your evening serum is your most active treatment step. For sensitive skin, two ingredients stand out.

Azelaic acid (10 to 15 percent) is a remarkable multitasker that is exceptionally well tolerated by even the most reactive skin. It reduces redness by inhibiting reactive oxygen species, addresses hyperpigmentation by suppressing tyrosinase, and has mild antibacterial properties. Unlike retinol or vitamin C, it rarely causes irritation.

Centella asiatica extract continues to be your ally in the evening, promoting collagen synthesis and helping to reduce inflammation accumulated during the day.

Apply three to four drops and press gently into the skin. Allow two minutes for absorption before the next step.

Step 5: Eye Cream

Repeat your morning eye cream application, or use a slightly richer formulation for overnight repair. Ingredients like peptides, shea butter, and squalane provide deep nourishment while you sleep. The same gentle touch applies.

Step 6: Rich Barrier-Repair Night Cream

Your night cream should be richer and more occlusive than your morning moisturizer. While your AM cream focuses on protection and lightweight comfort under sunscreen, your PM cream prioritizes deep repair.

Look for formulations containing ceramides, shea butter, squalane, and cholesterol. Occlusive ingredients like petrolatum (pharmaceutical grade), dimethicone, or beeswax create a protective seal that reduces TEWL by up to 80%, allowing all the actives beneath to work more effectively throughout the night.

Apply generously and massage in gentle upward strokes. Your skin should feel cushioned, cocooned, and deeply comfortable.

Step 7: Lip Treatment

The lips lack sebaceous glands and have an exceptionally thin stratum corneum, making them among the most vulnerable areas of the face. A dedicated lip treatment prevents overnight dryness and cracking.

Choose a lip balm or overnight mask containing lanolin, shea butter, ceramides, or squalane. Avoid ingredients like camphor, or phenol, which create a tingling sensation that signals irritation, not healing. Apply a generous amount as the final step of your evening ritual.

Your Weekly Treatment Schedule

Consistency builds resilience. This weekly calendar provides structure while allowing your skin regulate based on your skin's daily feedback, and never hesitate to simplify if your skin signals distress.

DAY	MORNING RITUAL	EVENING RITUAL	SPECIAL TREATMENT
Monday	Full 6-step AM routine	Full 7-step PM routine	Calming sheet mask or cream mask (based) after Step 4
Tuesday	Full 6-step AM routine	Full 7-step PM routine	None. Allow Monday's mask to continue
Wednesday	Full 6-step AM routine	Full 7-step PM routine	Add 2-3 drops of facial oil (rosehip or cream for extra barrier support
Thursday	Full 6-step AM routine	Full 7-step PM routine	Gentle enzyme exfoliation (Step 3 in ONLY exfoliation day.
Friday	Full 6-step AM routine	Full 7-step PM routine	None. Allow skin to recover from Thursday
Saturday	Full 6-step AM routine	Full 7-step PM routine	Calming sheet mask + <u>kansa wand</u> (gentle pressure only)
Sunday	Minimal: Micellar water + moisturizer + SPF	Minimal: Gentle cleanse + night cream	Rest day. Let your skin breathe. Minimal recovery.

Note on the kansa wand: This traditional Ayurvedic tool, made from a blend of copper, tin, and zinc, has properties that help calm reactive skin. Use only with gentle, sweeping strokes and no downward pressure for an enhanced cooling effect.

Ingredient Spotlight: Five Allies for Sensitive Skin

Not all active ingredients are aggressive. These five have been extensively studied and consistently d without compromising the barrier. They are the foundation of every product you choose for your ser



CALMING ELIXIRS FOR SENSITIVE SKIN

PROVEN EFICACY

Centella Asiatica		42%
Collodia Oatmeal	redness reduction	38%
Collodia Oatmeal		38% itch relief
Ceramides	24% barrier repair	24%
Panthnol/B5	hydration boost	35%
Aloe Vera	soothing effect	30%

Sources: J. Dermatol. Sci. Int. J. Cosmet Sci, Acta Dermato-Venevol, Skin Res. Technolcol, Planta Med

1. Centella Asiatica (Cica)

Clinical evidence: A 2020 study in the *Journal of Clinical Medicine* found that topical centella asiatic skin hydration, reduced TEWL, and decreased erythema (redness) in subjects with sensitive skin after

How to use it: Look for it in serums, moisturizers, and sheet masks. Effective at concentrations as low as 1 percent. Optimal results at 1 to 5 percent. Safe for twice-daily use.

2. Ceramides

What they do: Ceramides are lipid molecules that constitute approximately 50 percent of the skin barrier. In sensitive and eczema-prone skin, ceramide levels are measurably lower than in healthy skin. Topical ceramides directly replenish what is missing, restoring barrier integrity and reducing TEWL.

Clinical evidence: A landmark study published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* found that a ceramide-dominant moisturizer was as effective as a mid-potency steroid cream for treating eczema side effects associated with long-term steroid use.

How to use them: Prioritize products listing ceramide NP, ceramide AP, or ceramide EOP in the first list. Most effective when combined with cholesterol and fatty acids in the physiological 3:1:1 ratio. Use

3. Aloe Vera

What it does: Aloe vera contains over 75 active compounds, including acemannan (a polysaccharide with immune-modulating properties), salicylic acid (in trace amounts, providing gentle exfoliation), enzymes (bradykinase, which reduces inflammation), and vitamins A, C, and E. It soothes, cools, hydrates, and accelerates epithelial cell regeneration.

Clinical evidence: Research in the *Indian Journal of Dermatology* confirmed aloe vera's ability to improve skin hydration, and accelerate wound healing. Its cooling sensation provides immediate comfort for

How to use it: Apply pure aloe vera gel as a soothing treatment during flares, or choose serums and moisturizers that feature it as a primary ingredient. Store in the refrigerator for enhanced cooling effect.

4. Colloidal Oatmeal

What it does: Colloidal oatmeal is one of only a handful of ingredients recognized by the FDA as a skin protectant. It contains avenanthramides (polyphenols unique to oats) that inhibit NF-κB activation, a key driver of inflammation. It also contains beta-glucans that form a protective film on the skin, reducing TEWL and providing an anti-itch effect.

Clinical evidence: A study in the *Journal of Drugs in Dermatology* demonstrated that colloidal oatmeal reduced skin dryness, scaling, roughness, and itch intensity within two weeks. It has been safely used in formulations for over 60 years.

How to use it: Found in cleansers, moisturizers, masks, and bath products. Particularly effective in treating acute flares. Safe for daily use, including on children and during pregnancy.

5. Panthenol (Vitamin B5)

How to use it: One of the safest and most universally tolerated actives in skincare. Look for it in serum treatments. Effective at 1 percent; optimal at 5 percent. Use morning and evening.

Seasonal Adjustments: Adapting Your Ritual Through the Year

Sensitive skin does not exist in a vacuum. The changing seasons bring shifting humidity, temperature, and wind exposure, all of which require thoughtful adjustments to your ritual. The goal is always the same: maintain skin integrity and minimize triggers.

Summer Adjustments (May through September)

- **Sunscreen:** Mineral only, always. Consider a lighter-weight mineral SPF formulation or a tinted mineral sunscreen that doubles as a light foundation. Reapply every 90 minutes during outdoor activities.
- **Moisturizer:** Switch to a lighter barrier cream or gel-cream. Humidity provides natural moisture, but dry air can feel suffocating and may contribute to miliaria (heat rash).
- **Calming mists:** Keep a thermal water or rose water mist in the refrigerator and spritz throughout the day. This cools the skin, reduces heat-triggered redness, and replenishes hydration lost to perspiration.
- **Antioxidant support:** Consider adding a gentle antioxidant serum (vitamin E, green tea extract) to your routine to combat UV-generated free radical damage. Avoid vitamin C if it causes tingling.
- **Cleansing:** You may need to double cleanse in the evening to thoroughly remove water-resistant sunscreen. Use lukewarm water only.

Winter Adjustments (October through April)

- **Richer barrier cream:** Switch to a heavier moisturizer with more occlusive ingredients (shea butter, petrolatum). Indoor heating and cold outdoor air dramatically reduce humidity, increasing TEWL.
- **Facial oils:** Add two to three drops of rosehip, jojoba, or marula oil to your night cream every evening. These oils provide essential fatty acids that reinforce the lipid barrier.
- **Reduce exfoliation:** Consider reducing enzyme exfoliation from weekly to biweekly during the winter. Your compromised winter barrier cannot tolerate as much disruption.
- **Protective balms:** Apply a ceramide-rich balm to the most exposed areas (cheeks, nose, lips, hands) outdoors. This acts as a physical shield against wind and cold.
- **Humidifier:** Run a humidifier in your bedroom at 40 to 60 percent relative humidity. This single adjustment can dramatically reduce overnight TEWL and morning dryness.
- **Water temperature:** Resist the temptation of hot showers and baths. Hot water strips the barrier more than anything in your skincare routine. Lukewarm, always.

The Patch Testing Protocol: Your Safety Net

Every new product you introduce should undergo a patch test, no exceptions. Even products labeled "dermatologist-tested" can contain ingredients your unique biology reacts to. A proper patch test can save you weeks of recovery from a full-face reaction.

Phase 1: Inner Forearm Test (24 to 48 Hours)

Apply a small amount of the product to the inner forearm, an area that closely mimics facial skin sensitivity. Use a small adhesive bandage if the product is a leave-on treatment. Check at 24 hours and again at 48 hours for itching, burning, bumps, or any change in skin texture. If any reaction occurs, the product is not for you. Stop use immediately.

Phase 2: Behind-the-Ear Test (24 to 48 Hours)

If the forearm test passes, apply a small amount behind one ear (the mastoid area). This skin is thinner and more sensitive than facial skin. Again, wait 24 to 48 hours and monitor for any reaction.

Phase 3: Small Facial Area Test (72 Hours)

If both previous phases pass, apply the product to a small area of your face, ideally along the jawline or cheek. Use it as directed (morning or evening) for three consecutive days. If no reaction occurs after 72 hours, the product is likely safe for full-face use.

Important Patch Testing Notes

- Introduce only **one new product at a time**, with at least two weeks between new introductions to clearly identify the source of any reaction.
- Test during a period of skin stability, not during a flare or after recent exfoliation.
- A reaction can be immediate (within minutes) or delayed (24 to 72 hours). Delayed reactions are common for fragrance and preservative sensitivities.
- Keep a simple skincare journal noting each product tested and the result. Over time, you will build a record of your skin's tolerances and sensitivities.

Building Your Product Wardrobe: What to Look For

When selecting products for sensitive skin, the ingredient list is more important than the marketing quick-reference checklist:

Seek out: Ceramides, centella asiatica, panthenol, colloidal oatmeal, aloe vera, squalane, niacinamide, allantoin, bisabolol, zinc oxide (in sunscreens), shea butter, jojoba oil, and rosehip oil.

Avoid: Fragrance (parfum), essential oils, denatured alcohol, sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS), retinol (until high-concentration AHAs and BHAs, chemical sunscreen filters, witch hazel, menthol, and any product with more than fifteen ingredients (simplicity is your friend).

A note on "fragrance-free" labeling: In the United States, the term "fragrance-free" is not strictly regulated. When shopping, look for products that are labeled "fragrance-free" by scanning the full ingredient list for terms like parfum, fragrance, essential oil blends, or specific essential oils. "Unscented" is not the same as fragrance-free; unscented products may contain masking fragrances.

A Final Word: Patience as a Luxury

In a world that promises overnight transformations, the most radical act of self-care for sensitive skin repair takes a minimum of four to six weeks, and full restoration of resilient, calm, luminous skin can be achieved through consistent, gentle care.

Do not be discouraged by this timeline. Every evening you spend nurturing your barrier, every morning you use mineral SPF, every moment you choose gentleness over aggression, you are building something lasting to treat symptoms. You are cultivating resilience at the cellular level.

Your sensitive skin is not fragile. It is intelligent, communicative, and, when given the right support, can achieve extraordinary radiance. Trust the process. Trust your skin. And enjoy every step of the ritual.

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