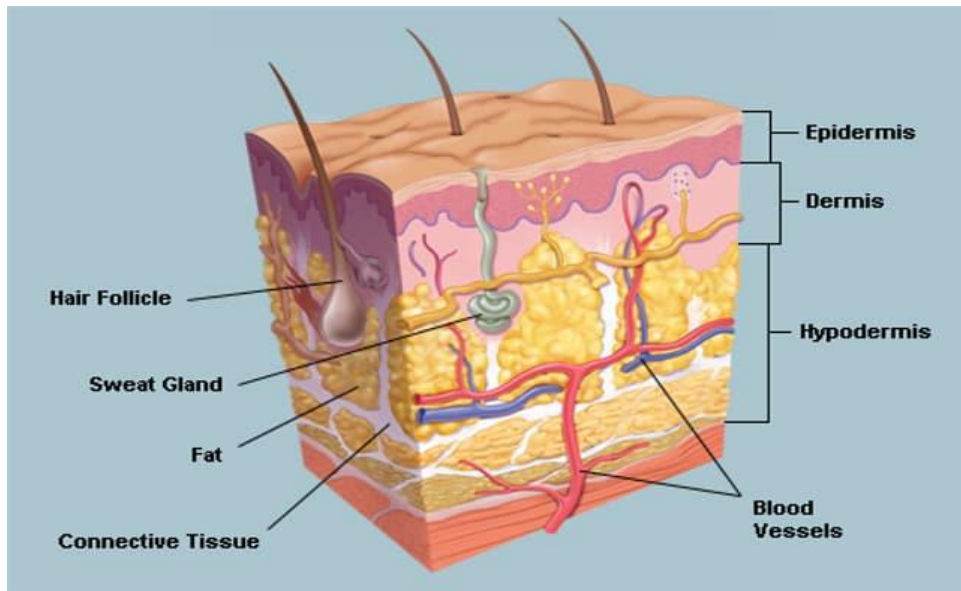


The Skin



The skin is the largest organ of the body, with a total area of about 20 square feet. The skin protects us from microbes and the elements, helps regulate body temperature, and permits the sensations of touch, heat, and cold.

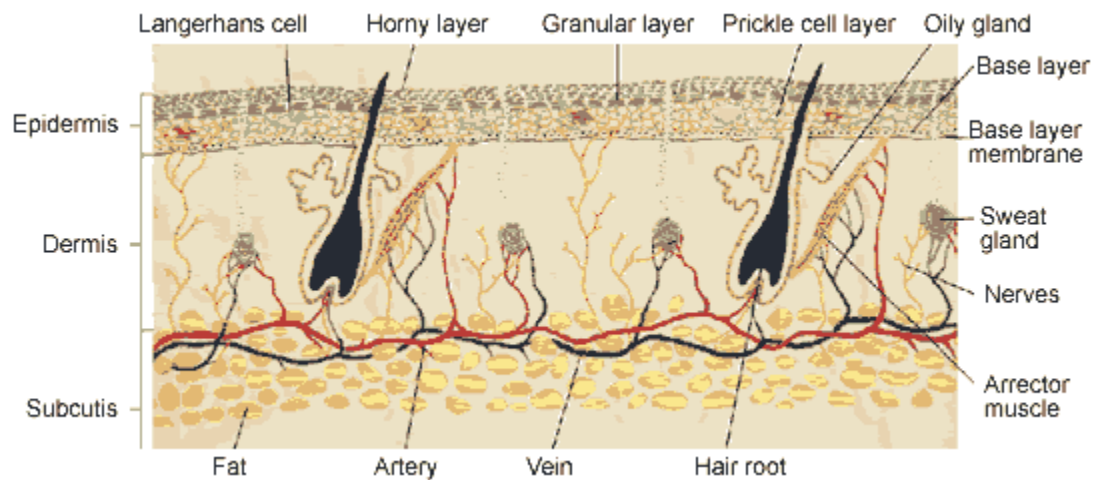
Skin has three layers:

- The epidermis, the outermost layer of skin, provides a waterproof barrier and creates our skin tone.
- The dermis, beneath the epidermis, contains tough connective tissue, hair follicles, and sweat glands.
- The deeper subcutaneous tissue (hypodermis) is made of fat and connective tissue.

The skin's color is created by special cells called melanocytes, which produce the pigment melanin. Melanocytes are located in the epidermis.

Functions of the skin

- Provides a protective barrier against mechanical, thermal and physical injury and hazardous substances.
- Prevents loss of moisture.
- Reduces harmful effects of UV radiation.
- Acts as a sensory organ (touch, detects temperature).
- Helps regulate temperature.
- An immune organ to detect infections etc.
- Production of vitamin D.



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