



## **BALNEOLOGY**

The use of water has been an integral part of caring for the skin since ancient times. While the Greeks took the mineral waters internally or applied compresses externally, the Romans developed hydrotherapy centers and spas. In fact, the word spa had come from the Latin *salus per aquam* (health from water), although the current derivation is from the Belgium town of Spa. "Taking the waters" meant going to a spa to drink the waters for prevention or treatment of a disease.

Balneology may be considered as the study of the medicinal uses of mineral water that utilizes bathing. Mineral water is defined as that water which comes from a spring or well and has a noticeable mineral content. The minerals include aluminum, arsenic, calcium, carbonates, iron, lithium, selenium, sodium chloride, and sulfur. Climatotherapy utilizes the atmosphere, the temperature of water and air, humidity, barometric pressure, and sunlight.

There are many parts of the world where the use of mineral water flourishes. For example, bathing at the Dead Sea is well known for treating psoriasis, while bathing in the waters at La Roche-Posay and Avène in France is recognized as being adjunctive to the treatment of atopic dermatitis (eczema), psoriasis, and burns.

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