



Table 4.1 Functions of the Integumentary System

Functions	How accomplished
Protects deeper tissues from	
• Mechanical damage (bumps)	Physical barrier contains keratin, which toughens cells; fat cells to cushion blows; and both pressure and pain receptors, which alert the nervous system to possible damage.
• Chemical damage (acids and bases)	Has relatively impermeable keratinized cells; contains pain receptors, which alert the nervous system to possible damage.
• Microbe damage	Has an unbroken surface and "acid mantle" (skin secretions are acidic and thus inhibit microbes, such as bacteria). Phagocytes ingest foreign substances and pathogens, preventing them from penetrating into deeper body tissues.
• Ultraviolet (UV) radiation (damaging effects of sunlight or tanning beds)	Melanin produced by melanocytes offers protection from UV damage.
• Thermal (heat or cold) damage	Contains heat/cold/pain receptors.
• Desiccation (drying out)	Contains a water-resistant glycolipid and keratin.

© 2018 Pearson Education, Inc. 6

Table 4.1 Functions of the Integumentary System (continued)

Functions	How accomplished
Aids in body heat loss or heat retention (controlled by the nervous system)	<i>Heat loss:</i> By activating sweat glands and by allowing blood to flush into skin capillary beds so that heat can radiate from the skin surface. <i>Heat retention:</i> By not allowing blood to flush into skin capillary beds.
Aids in excretion of urea and uric acid	Contained in perspiration produced by sweat glands.
Synthesizes vitamin D	Modified cholesterol molecules in skin converted to vitamin D in the presence of sunlight.



