

Understanding Skin Care Ingredients

Natural vs. Traditional, and What You Need

The use of chemicals in cosmetics and skin care products is something we hear about more and more. Some natural alternatives to chemicals exist, but many cosmetic companies won't use them because they are more costly and less readily available. While most products cannot be 100 percent natural (because of bacterial growth), many natural alternatives to harsh chemicals can be helpful and effective in skin care.

For example, cosmetics often need preservatives. Pre-bottled products must contain a good preservative to control the growth of bacteria, molds, and yeasts. Bacteria can grow in an unpreserved product in a matter of days. While some natural preservatives can

There is an emerging interest by manufacturers and consumers in natural preservatives. This is where your licensed esthetician can assist you in identifying the right professional product (as opposed to an over-the-counter product) that will be best for your skin. Manufacturers are now looking to the past and using exotic flowers, herbs, and oils that were used thousands of years ago. When present in sufficient percentages in products, many of these natural ingredients can be effective for cleansing, rebalancing, and reducing the signs of age.

Some companies make claims their products are 100 percent natural. Often the chemicals, such as cosmetic



Knowing the ingredients in your skin care products can help you achieve your skin care goals.

help stabilize a product, a chemical preservative is probably needed for proper protection. Yet, many products on the market contain unnecessarily high percentages of preservatives to achieve longer shelf lives. Usually less than 1 percent of the cosmetic preservative is sufficient to stabilize a product for a shelf life of one to two years.

preservatives, are hidden in the ingredient list. For example, a company can claim their product contains no preservatives and you may not recognize one on the ingredient list. But some may contain alcohol (ethanol, ethyl, or isopropyl), which will dehydrate and irritate your skin. Keep in mind that

Continued on page 2

*Healthy skin is
only a touch
away.*

-Lori Murtagh

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In this Issue

Understanding Skin Care Ingredients
What is LED Therapy?
The Scoop on Sugar

Continued from page 1

alcohol is a naturally occurring chemical; some forms are beneficial and moisturizing to skin, such as cetyl and cetearyl.

Below are some natural ingredients that may be appropriate to replace chemical formulations that can be hard on the skin.

Natural Preservatives

These can be found in many forms, including grape seed extract, food-grade preservatives (such as citric acid, orris root powder, potassium sorbate, and sodium benzoate), pure essential oils, and vitamin E oil or extract. These can help control some bacterial growth and help maintain shelf life. Body and bath oils, bath salts, powdered clay or grain-based products, and salves are among the products that don't need cosmetic chemical preservatives.

Corn and Sugar

These two ingredients, along with others, can undergo a process that produces a mild lathering agent. Some products found in health food stores feature this natural lathering agent in shampoos.

Natural Carrier Oils

An alternative to mineral oil, natural carrier oils (like apricot kernel, almond, jojoba, vitamin E, and others) can help to nourish, moisturize, and soften skin. They are excellent for body massage and can be blended and used directly on skin.

Pure Essential Oils

High-grade essential oils are extracted from flowers, herbs, leaves, stems, and roots by a steam distillation process. Each essential oil has its own unique properties and can be helpful both externally (topically) and internally via aromatherapy. Avoid synthetic essential oils; it can be highly irritating just to smell them, let alone put them on your skin.

Natural Colors

Some alternatives to artificial colors that may be available are carrot oil, chlorophyll, and naturally colored clays. You may pay more for them; many cosmetic companies avoid using these as they are difficult to find and are much more expensive than traditional options.

Herbal Extracts

Herbal extracts are more concentrated than other formulations and can be beneficial to skin. Some of the more popular extracts include aloe, chamomile, green tea, kelp/seaweed, and marigold. They do, however, often contain grain alcohol or synthetic glycerin. Vegetable glycerin is a natural alternative.

Oatmeal

This is an excellent skin cleaner. Oatmeal gently removes dead skin cells while cleaning and softening skin. It can be found in body masks, facial masks, and facial scrubs. While many facial scrubs contain ingredients like kernels and walnut shells, which can be too rough on the face, a gentle ingredient like oatmeal is a great alternative.

Fruit Acids

Fruit acids and alpha hydroxy acids can be helpful in removing dead skin cells, enabling new cell growth. In general, these fruit acids can be too strong for those with sensitive skin. Your esthetician can help you discern which products contain these acids and in what percentages.

Natural Fruit Enzymes

Papaya and pineapple contain enzymes that can help to gently remove dead skin cells, renew the skin, and improve circulation.

There are times when returning to the simpler ways of the past reaps big benefits. There are many different ways to let natural ingredients help you look and feel your best. Your licensed esthetician can help you make good decisions about what products--natural or not--are best for your lifestyle, skin care needs, and preferences.



Herbals extracts, like aloe, can contribute to healthy skin, without the use of harsh chemicals.

What is LED Therapy?

Carrie Patrick

LED therapy is a skin care treatment that uses light-emitting diodes (LEDs) of various colors, normally red, blue, and infrared, to maintain healthy skin. LEDs produce a low-powered glowing light, which is positioned to shine onto the face or other area being treated. No heat is produced by the LEDs, and it should not be confused with laser therapy.

The skin benefits of different colors of LED light have been identified through a broad array of studies. The most often cited study is the Whelan study, published in 2001 by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center, which found that LED light helped speed up wound healing.

Red light is most often used for general skin improvement and to reduce the visible signs of aging. Blue light has been shown to destroy acne bacteria. Infrared light may have beneficial effects on the skin's natural supply of collagen and elastin, which are responsible for maintaining skin firmness and

resilience. A series of regular treatments will provide the best results.

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

No special preparation is necessary. Simply arrive to your appointment on time, relax, and enjoy the treatment. Your skin care professional will cleanse your skin and may also apply a serum or other facial products to enhance the benefits of your session, depending on your goals and the range of treatments offered.

The LED device will be positioned on your skin, or up to a few inches away. Your eyes will be covered so that the light does not bother you. Relax and rest while the glow of the LEDs bathes your skin.

Typically, no sensation is felt. Some people may feel a slight tingling, or see flashes in their vision temporarily as a result of having a light source close to their face. Keeping your eyes closed and covered during the treatment will help

avoid this.



LED therapy can help maintain healthy skin.

The Scoop on Sugar Not Such a Sweet Story

Shelley Burns, N.D.

Most people have no idea just how much sugar is in the foods Americans consume. However, this sweet culprit may be behind many health issues, including skin problems. Here's why.

When refined carbohydrates, otherwise known as simple sugars, are consumed in excess, they cause an increase in blood sugar levels. This excess sugar (glucose) attaches itself to proteins and is referred to as glycosylation. All cells in our bodies have a protein component to them including our hormones, enzymes, cholesterol, and immune cells. As proteins become coated with glucose, they are unable to work effectively.

Collagen, that vital component of a glowing complexion, makes up 40 percent of the proteins in the body. Glycosylation hastens protein cross-linking, which weakens collagen. The result: wrinkles.

But wait, there's more. Sugar also causes an increase in levels of cortisol, the stress hormone, which can interfere with

hormonal balance and increase inflammation. Skin inflammation can manifest as acne, puffiness under the eyes, and eczema. Sugar also increases insulin levels and reduces sensitivity of insulin. In fact, research shows people with acne process sugar poorly, which could be a direct result of high cortisol and high insulin levels in the blood.

And finally, sugar depletes the necessary nutrients required to keep the immune system healthy. For example, sugar interferes with the way the body uses vitamin C, which is needed for the formation of collagen and elastin as well as immunity. It can also lead to sluggish digestion, which also affects the skin.

The best way to steer clear of sugar is to read labels. Avoid products that list sugar in the first three ingredients, and be aware of words ending in "ose" such as sucrose, dextrose, and maltose, all of which are sugar indicators. Also avoid processed foods and refined carbohydrates, such as white flour, white rice, and white potatoes.

Whenever the sweet allure of sugar tempts you, remember, sugar-free is key to beauty.

Throughout history 'tender loving care' has uniformly been recognized as a valuable element in healing.

-Larry Dossey

A SPECIAL NOTE FROM LORI:

With recently continuing my education and re-certifying as an oncology trained esthetician, my mind is on cancer and how sugar feeds it. I too have to work hard to reduce my intake! Sugar comes in numerous forms and affects us in many ways. This newsletter addresses some very important facts, but I would like to add one more. Sugar feeds cancer. When our blood sugar increases, so does the production of insulin. Insulin acts as a stimulant to the growth of tumor cells. Let us be mindful of all the important reasons to avoid sugar so we don't fall into the sugar trap.

Also, I included an article on LED treatments. As you may know, I use LEDs in my facials and they produce fantastic results. LED treatment is wonderful for penetrating various serums and masques, stimulating collagen and elastin for that aging client, killing bacteria for the acne client, and relieving discomfort for that oncology client. Yes, it is even safe to use with the oncology client (with physician approval)!

This Fall, let's work together to improve your skin health so that we start the new year off to a great start!

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MEMBER

