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# Restoring & Maintaining a Healthy Looking Face

Patients often ask me to recommend skin care products that might restore or help maintain healthy appearing skin. With so many different skin care products available, it is difficult for them to know which ones to use. Many products make "anti-wrinkle" and other claims with little, if any, scientific evidence to support these claims. Expensive products often contain the same ingredients as inexpensive products, but are priced higher because of packaging and advertising costs to promote the hype. How to separate the hype from the science can be very difficult. It is unfortunate that selling false promises is often rewarded with large profits. Buyer beware! For more information on separating fact from fiction on skin care products read my Autumn 2008 newsletter at [www.rutlandskin.com](http://www.rutlandskin.com)

For patients requesting advice on how to restore and maintain healthy appearing facial skin I recommend the following daily skin care regimen.

### ***In the morning:***

- 1) Cleanse your skin gently (see cleanser recommendations below)
- 2) Apply a vitamin C serum moisturizer (See vitamin C serum recommendation below)
- 3) Once the vitamin C serum has dried, apply sun block or makeup containing sun block (some sun block products can also serve as a moisturizer)

In the evening:

- 4) Cleanse your skin gently
- 5) Apply tretinoin (Retin A, Renova) cream to help minimize fine wrinkling and minimize brown age spots. For best results see application instructions under "Retinoids" below, on reverse side.
- 6) Moisturize, if needed

**Skin Cleansers:** My favorite overall cleanser is Cetaphil's *Gentle Daily Facial Cleanser*. It is very mild. *Gentle Cleansing Wash* (Purpose) and *Fresh Foaming Cleanser* (Neutrogena), *Foaming Face Wash* (Olay) are also worth trying, if you haven't already found a cleanser that you like. For acne prone patients a cleanser that contains salicylic acid (e.g., Neutrogena's *Acne Wash*) or benzoyl peroxide (e.g., *Benzac Wash*) can help unclog pores to help prevent acne. However, be aware that these acne washes are more likely to dry out your face, particularly when used with tretinoin or another retinoid. Also be aware that benzoyl peroxide bleaches colored fabrics.

Women who wear makeup may want to use a cleanser that is slightly abrasive to help remove make-up residue from their skin (e.g., *Daily Facials Cleansing Cloths-Sensitive Skin* by Olay).

**Moisturizers:** Some individuals have naturally dry skin that can benefit from regular use of a moisturizer. Some moisturizers contain sunscreen and can be used for both purposes, to simplify your skin care regimen. Some moisturizers contain ingredients that might be beneficial in preventing the aging skin process. Most of these are known antioxidants and are thought to be beneficial by limiting skin injury by free radicals. Antioxidants include vitamins A, C, and E; superoxide dismutase; copper, flavonoids; beta carotene; niacinamide, glutathione; selenium; and zinc. Copper peptide and copper may promote collagen synthesis and help in suppressing damage from free radical formation. Some moisturizers, particularly thick creams, can cause acne and an acne-like condition called perioral dermatitis.

**Vitamin C serum:** Vitamin C is a free-radical fighter that helps minimize sun damage. It also promotes collagen production, evens skin tone and improves the appearance of fine lines. The better vitamin C serums contain 10% to 20% L-ascorbic acid (vitamin C) along with 0.5% ferulic acid at the optimal pH between 2 and 3. We currently recommend ***Skin Beauty Soution's Ferulic C&E serum***, available from the company or Amazon.com. It has the correct ingredients and pH. Be sure to screw the cover on tight after use, and store in the refrigerator to lessen oxidation that can weaken the product over time. I recommend applying the vitamin C serum to your face in the morning, and after it dries, apply sun block, or a make-up containing sun block over it.

**Sun block:** To demonstrate the long-term benefits of daily sun protection, compare the youthful appearance of the sun protected skin on your derrière to the aged appearance of the sun-exposed skin on your face or the back of your hands. Now you can better appreciate the benefits of applying a sun block to

your sun-exposed skin **EVERYDAY**. Apply sun block religiously each morning, regardless of the season or the weather conditions. Even on cloudy and winter days your skin is exposed to significant amounts of light that can damage your skin. If you wear makeup everyday, find one with broad spectrum (UVA and UVB) sun protection (SPF 30 or higher). Some sun blocks contain moisturizers and can be used for both purposes, to simplify your skin care regimen. For a short list of my current recommended sun blocks see: [www.rutlandskin.com/sun\\_protection.pdf](http://www.rutlandskin.com/sun_protection.pdf) I recommend Coppertone Waterbabies as one of the best water resistant sunscreens. [https://www.rutlandskin.com/Newsletter-Summer\\_2023.pdf](https://www.rutlandskin.com/Newsletter-Summer_2023.pdf)

**Take supplemental vitamin D.** Rigorous sun protection can decrease your body's ability to make vitamin D. It is therefore recommended that adults take ~1,000 IU of supplemental vitamin D each day.

**Retinoids (e.g., Retin-A, Renova):** Much scientific data has demonstrated the benefits of tretinoin (the active ingredient in Retin-A, Renova, and other products). Tretinoin has been shown to erase fine wrinkles and freckle-like brown spots from the skin. Other retinoids such as adapalene (Differin, now available without a prescription), and tazarotene (Avage, Tazorac) haven't been studied as much. Retinol (Vitamin A), which is in a lot of the over-the-counter skin care products, has not been shown to be as effective as tretinoin in improving fine wrinkling and brown age spots. An additional benefit of retinoids is that they also help prevent acne.

I usually prescribe generic tretinoin. All of the retinoids tend to be drying and can cause redness and mild skin flaking. To minimize these side effects I recommend the following: 1) Apply it sparingly (a green pea size amount should suffice to cover much of the face). 2) Wait at least 15 minutes after washing your face to let it dry before applying it. 3) Avoid applying it to sensitive areas (close to the eyes, corners of the mouth, and nasal creases). 4) Start by applying it every third night for two to four weeks, then every other night for 4 weeks, then gradually increase to every night. If redness or flakiness develops, decrease the frequency back to every other or every third night, as tolerated. You can still benefit from tretinoin treatment even with less frequent applications. Full benefits of tretinoin take months, and can be maintained with regular use. 5) Use a moisturizer one to two times daily to counter-act the drying effects.

To compare the cost of tretinoin or other prescriptions at local pharmacy chains, go to **GoodRX.com**. Enter your zip code, the product, strength and quantity. Often this will generate a discount coupon that must be presented at the pharmacy when you submit your prescription.

**Makeup:** If you wear makeup, find one with broad spectrum (UVA and UVB) sun protection (SPF 30 or higher). Beware that makeup can promote acne, particularly oil-based products. Water-based make-ups are sometimes labeled as "non-comedogenic", which means they do not promote acne. However, even products that claim to be non-acne causing, can promote acne.

**Other measures to improve skin color, texture and wrinkles:** There are other measures that can be taken to improve the appearance of ones facial skin besides the daily use of sunscreen and retinoids. The following are easy measures requiring little to no recovery time.

- 1) **Bleaching agents** that contain azelaic acid can sometimes be helpful in minimizing or removing brown age spots.
- 2) **Photorejuvenation treatments** utilize light-based systems (laser/intense pulsed light) that can erase spider veins & redness from the skin, as well as brown age spots and fine wrinkles. Skin texture & pore size can be improved to some degree.
- 3) **Chemical peels** can clear unwanted brown spots and improve the texture and minimize fine lines.
- 4) **Filler treatments** can be useful to minimize facial wrinkles, hollows and plump up the lips. Both involve injecting material to minimize the appearance of a crease or to augment the size of the lips.
- 5) **Daxxify, Botox & Dysport treatments** provide an easy way to erase wrinkles, particularly crow's feet, and forehead, frown and scowl lines.
- 6) **Medical Microneedling** can be used to improve the appearance of scars, and fine lines by stimulating natural collagen production, that can be augmented with vitamin C serum use.

Learn about these treatments at [www.rutlandskin.com](http://www.rutlandskin.com)