



IF IT WERE AN ORDINARY SUB, YOU'D EAT IT AN ORDINARY WAY.



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8 Illuminating Skincare Facts

Find out what dermatologists, aestheticians and other pros know about getting a clear complexion

By Brynn Mannino Posted March 17, 2011 from [WomansDay.com](#)

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The overwhelming selection of cosmetic products and treatments on the market can make choosing the right acne treatment and antiaging regimen overwhelming. But while we depend on professionals to help us make smart choices, we can also help ourselves by learning as much as we can about skincare. So we called in the ranks—including dermatologists, aestheticians, nutritionists and celebrity-endorsed skincare gurus—to find out the truth about achieving youthful, glowing skin.

1. Drugstore products can work as well as the fancier ones.

"Most of the time, the biggest difference between a low-end and high-end product is the packaging, not the ingredients," says Debra J. Wattenberg, MD, associate professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical School in New York City. She suggests checking the label for the percentage of active ingredient(s) the product contains (they're listed from most to least on the back of the label). And for a list of ingredients proven to work, from salicylic acid for acne to retinol for fine lines, check out WD's "[Beauty Product Ingredients to Look For](#)" so you can shop like a pro the next time you're at the drugstore.



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2. Facials aren't a preventive treatment for acne.

"People with blackheads or whiteheads definitely benefit from deep cleansing," says Dr. Wattenberg. "But if they need that, they probably need a prescribed regimen to go along with it—otherwise the problem will come back." In other words, while a facial is great for relaxation, pampering and to remove built-up dirt and oil, it won't stop acne from resurfacing. So, while nobody's discouraging your "me" time, make sure to see a dermatologist for more preventive measures, if necessary.

3. Less can be better than more.

While a strict regimen of prescription pills, pads, washes and creams can really help people who suffer from serious acne problems, for anyone else it can do more harm than good, says dermatologist Tess Mauricio, MD, founder of Scripps Ranch Dermatology & Cosmetic Center in La Jolla, California. Best-case scenario? [Dry skin](#) and peeling. Worst-case scenario? "In patients with olive to dark skin, chronic irritation can actually cause discoloration and temporary scarring," she says. So unless your doctor recommends prescription treatment, you're probably better off with the tried-and-true skincare trifecta of a nonirritating cleanser, moisturizer and sunscreen.

4. The most popular skin treatment may not be right for you.

Because our [skin](#) tones and facial features vary widely, everyone reacts differently to cosmetic procedures. For example, skin color is something to take into consideration when seeking laser treatment (the light often can't penetrate dark skin as efficiently, which causes surface damage like burning, Dr. Wattenberg explains). Likewise, those with heavy eye features are not prime candidates for Botox, which may cause you to look tired since it can prevent you from raising your forehead. "The key is to schedule a consultation with a dermatologist who has experience treating people with your skin type and features," Dr. Mauricio says.

5. What you put into your body is just as important as what you apply on your skin.

Lisa Drayer, RD, author of *The Beauty Diet: Looking Great Has Never Been So Delicious*, says certain nutrients can fight the signs of aging (the amino acids in protein support collagen) and acne (vitamin C has anti-inflammatory properties). But just as crucial to a clear complexion is what you don't eat. "When your body is having trouble processing something, its solution is to push it out through your skin," says Joanna Vargas, celebrity skincare consultant and founder of [Skin Care Sanctuary](#) in New York City. Worst foods for your skin? Processed and greasy eats. But that's not all. According to Vargas, some people also have reactions to healthy foods, like bananas for example, which she says contain enzyme inhibitors that can trigger breakouts. An easy way to keep your skin glowing is to ensure you're drinking plenty of water. "Without proper hydration, toxins are not passed through urination, but rather escape the body through the skin, which can cause various irritations," says Sharon Richter, RD, in Manhattan.

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6. Results don't happen overnight.

Just because you don't see instant results doesn't mean a treatment's not working. Case in point: topical bleach agents, which can take up to three months before they noticeably lighten dark spots or freckles. Same goes for most acne treatments. "I usually tell people it can take up to a month to really start seeing improvement—but the more severe your acne, the longer it takes," says Dr. Wattenberg. However, if you're not seeing results in 10 to 12 weeks, the acne products probably aren't working, she adds.

7. You may never outgrow acne.

"Acne is a condition that doesn't follow the rules," says Dr. Wattenberg. Some people see significant improvements early on or grow out of it completely, while others never grow out of it. Some who never had childhood acne get adult-onset acne, while for others it's linked to hormonal changes. "It's more genetics than anything," Dr. Wattenberg says. The good news: Countless treatments already exist, such as Accutane, which some dermatologists consider a cure, and new ones are popping up every day to help control the condition.

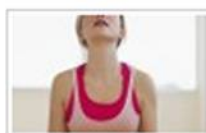
8. You can usually try prescriptions before you buy them.

Most of the time, it comes down to just asking your doctor for samples; if there are some in the office, he or she is usually happy to hand them over. If your doctor doesn't have any on hand and you can't afford the prescription, Dr. Mauricio suggests taking a more aggressive route: "If you're very motivated, you can contact the pharmaceutical company directly," she says (a simple Internet search should provide their number). That said, your doctor would have to be willing to get involved—and perhaps plead your case for you—since pharmaceutical companies won't send samples to individuals.

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