

The Secrets of Perpetual Youth
A Guide To Making Your Skin The Best It Can Be
by Dr. Susan Ellis

There are a multitude of products, regimens, and procedures flooding the skincare market. I receive numerous requests everyday for product and procedure recommendations. I feel that the best and most comprehensive way to satisfy our patients' needs is to provide descriptions of advanced skin care in a written format. Unfortunately, there is not one magic cream or procedure that will unilaterally make your skin fabulous. Achieving this goal is dependent upon making a long term commitment to skin care.

First and foremost: minimal sun exposure. The absolutely worst thing you can do for your skin is to expose it to the sun, or to a tanning bed, for that matter. Not only is the sun the fastest skin ager, but exposure to it also significantly increases one's risk of developing skin cancer, especially living at our altitude. The best thing you can do to avoid sun is to stay out of the sun during peak sun hours (10am to 4pm) and to wear a high SPF sunscreen (20 or higher) daily. If you absolutely must be out during peak sun hours, wear a hat.

Secondly, no smoking. I can always tell a smoker by her skin; it's often deeply wrinkled and leathery. Smoking certainly makes you look older than your peers!

If you still insist on sunbathing and smoking after reading the above, I do not recommend that you read any further; just throw this pamphlet out. You will be wasting your money on any skin improvements.

Now to discuss cosmeceuticals, otherwise known as skin care products. I love the fancy department stores and the bargains at Walmart, just as much as the next gal, but when it comes to buying products for my skin, Neiman-Marcus or Target – they just don't cut it. The products that truly do something for your skin are not available over the counter; they are either dispensed through a physician's office or through a prescription. The good news is that there are a number of products out there with significant medical research behind them that are clinically proven to improve the skin.

Skin Care Products - The basic necessities for any skin care program.

I think products are the most cost-effective way to maintain beautiful skin; they are essential for maintenance. If you use appropriate products, you *will* have improvement in your skin.

Retinoids (Renova, Retin-A, Avage) These products cause an increase in collagen. Over time, retinoids reduce wrinkles, fade brown spots, and improve texture and tone. Some individuals have a hard time using retinoids, because they cause skin irritation and photosensitivity. If you experience problems with these products, I recommend stopping them until your skin heals and then reintroducing them every third night at first. Another trick is to first apply a silicon-containing moisturizer, like Cetaphil lotion, before applying the retinoid. A small amount is all that is needed. The stronger the strength of

the retinoid (Avage is the strongest on the market), the more effective it is. No product except for the retinoids is legally authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to make the claim of improving wrinkles.

Alpha Hydroxy Acids(AHAS)

Like the retinoids, there is significant medical research backing the claims of improving skin and making it appear less aged. Alpha hydroxy acids are fabulous moisturizers and will “plump” the skin, thereby reducing fine lines temporarily. These products will also exfoliate the skin making it smoother and with less skin discoloration. Alpha hydroxy acids are available in a serum and in a moisturizer form. It doesn’t matter which vehicle you chose; both work well. Personally, I like to apply AHAS in the evening, as the skin actually increases exfoliation while we sleep.

Antioxidants

Coffee Berry Extract

Revale’ moisturizers and cleansers are the newest and most potent natural antioxidants available in skin care today. Scientific testing shows that *CoffeeBerry* has a higher antioxidant capacity than green tea, pomegranate and vitamins C and E. Topical antioxidants can (1)rejuvenate skin damaged by daily exposure to free radical-molecules that cause breakdown of collagen and contribute to skin aging (2) Protect the skin against environmental damage, such as sun, wind, and temperature (3) reverse the signs of aging.

Topical Vitamin C

An antioxidant that helps prevent wrinkles before they form, corrects pigmentation, and even offers some sun protection and skin cancer prevention. Vitamin C must be preserved in a stabilized form. Be careful about which products you purchase. There are many companies who tout vitamin C in their formulas, without it being in a form the skin can actually utilize. Some formulas may claim to contain vitamin C, but only a handful of brands (IS clinical, Skinceuticals, Cellex C) actually have the patented formula of preserving topical vitamin C in its active form. There are products available that combine vitamin C with vitamin E, ferulic acid, olive leaf extract, or Pentapeptides. These combinations are thought to be more powerful than vitamin C alone. Some of the more powerful serums can be irritating, at least when first applied to the skin. Patients have asked me if it’s enough to take oral vitamin C. for their skin; my answer is that if you want to experience the benefits of vitamin C on your skin, it’s far better to put the vitamin directly on your skin. Vitamin C is best used in the morning before your moisturizer. Five to six drops of serum should be dispensed into the palm of your hand, and with the other hand, use your finger to dot some of the serum on the bone around your eyes and then smooth the rest onto your entire face.

Soy products, Green tea products

These products work well on inflamed skin, such as skin that is sensitive or prone to Rosacea. The products are grouped in the same class as the vitamin C products, as they are all antioxidants. Soy is found in Skinceuticals Eye Balm and Face cream. Many patients find these products quite soothing and easy to tolerate. Green tea is also an

antioxidant, and is found to be soothing. Both of these products are weaker antioxidants than vitamin C.

Growth Factors (Skin Medica TNS Recovery Complex)

This product was developed by Dr. Richard Fitzpatrick of San Diego, California. He was using infant foreskins (discarded after circumcisions) to grow in culture to fortify artificial skin. This culture of neonatal cells (tested for communicable diseases) produces 6 infant-cell growth factors that are responsible for repairing the skin and building collagen. Dr. Fitzpatrick had the bright idea to formulate these extracted growth factors into a serum to treat aging skin. The result is TNS recovery complex; the product isn't cheap, but if you want to do everything possible to improve your skin, this product is a must. I recommend this product, and I use it myself. This product is best used twice a day for the first three months, and then once a day in the morning, for maintenance. Please apply this product before applying anything else. If you are using topical vitamin C, put TNS on first.

PAL-KTTKS (IsClinical Super Serum and Strivectin)

This class of antiagers consists of cellular messengers that direct the cell to behave in a more youthful fashion. Strivectin was the first "pentapeptide" on the market and has been billed to be "better than Botox." I feel that this advertising is misleading, because the two products work in entirely different ways, and accomplish different ends. Botox works on the underlying muscles to prevent wrinkles and frown lines, whereas these pentapeptide products work to build collagen and make the actual skin more youthful in appearance. IsClinical Super Serum, one of my favorite products, combines both PAL-KTTKS and 15% vitamin C in one product.

Hydracool/B5 hydrating complex

This product works to seal in extra moisture. I think it is best used before applying a moisturizer or on its own in place of a moisturizer. It is in a serum form, so it is lighter and less greasy than traditional moisturizing lotions and creams. I often recommend it to people who tend to break-out easily or as an additional moisturizer for someone already using a cream or lotion form.

Pro-Niacin (NIA 24 products)

This is a patented, continuous-release system of Niacin. Niacin builds stronger, better skin that's more resilient and resistant to damage. By improving the skin's barrier function, overall skintone and texture improve. *NIA 24* reduces the appearance of visible brown spots, hyperpigmentation and lines specifically associated with sun damage. Many of our patients find that when they mix the moisturizer (NIA skin strengthening complex) with their retinoid, they are able to tolerate the retinoid with less irritation and peeling. NIA 24 makes a 30 SPF mineral sunscreen, a moisturizer, and two cleansers.