

# What Skin Problems? These Experts Reveal The Single Best Thing You Can Do For Healthy Skin

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By Stephanie Castillo



In honor of National Healthy Skin Month, we bring you healthy skin habits from top dermatologists and estheticians. Photo courtesy of Shutterstock

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Dry, chapped, cracked: Winter is open season on a person's skin. It's no coincidence, then, the [American Academy of Dermatology](#) declared November National Healthy Skin Month. Per their website, "now is the time to prepare ... for colder fall and winter weather that can affect their skin and aggravate certain conditions with drier air and chilly temperatures."

Over the course of the month, the AAD hopes to inspire patients to learn how to care for their skin, hair, and nails, while also inspiring dermatologists to engage their patients in conversation about the many [resources](#) available for their beauty-related concerns. Skin, however, should be a top priority; it's the body's largest and fastest growing [organ](#). It keeps germs out, and the blood and the muscles and other organs in.

The thing is, healthy skin is as important as it is overwhelming. There's an abundance of tips and products out there — it's hard to determine what works. So, we took it upon ourselves to make everything a whole lot easier. By easy, we mean we crowd-sourced dermatologists and estheticians for their single best tips for healthy skin. All those single pieces of advice added up to five major steps

you can take this month, and every month after.

## Start Early

“The best thing you can do for your skin is to start early, to take care of it by using the right products for your skin type,” Dr. Rebecca Kazin, of the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery and the Johns Hopkins Department of Dermatology, told Medical Daily.

A person’s skin type can range from sensitive, to oily, to a combination of sorts. Products are made to treat certain types, and the sooner you figure out which type you are, the sooner you can narrow products down to what’s relevant for you.

Renee Rouleau, celebrity esthetician and skin care expert, would agree. “The one-size-fits-all approach does not work when it comes to skin health. To get the best results, you need to take all of your skin’s needs into consideration,” she said. “Most skin care lines still cater to dry, normal, and oily. These categories simply look at how much or how little oil your skin produces. Most people have bigger issues than just their oil production! Sensitivity, redness, rosacea, hyperpigmentation, discoloration, the occasional breakout, wrinkles — the list goes on and on. In order to get the best results for your skin, you must address multiple skin concerns and goals at once.”

## Pass On Packaged Foods

You are what you eat — the "you" in this case refers to your skin. Without adequate greens and fresh produce, the skin will suffer, Lauren Talbot, certified clinical nutritionist and author of [Clear Skin Detox Diet: A Revolutionary Plan to Heal Your Skin from the Inside Out](#), told Medical Daily. A diet consisting mostly of packaged products offers little substantial nourishment, and in order to nourish the skin, the body and cells need bio-available nutrients that offer a variety of minerals, proteins, vitamins, antioxidants and enzymes for cell regeneration and youthful glowing skin. Specifically, the body needs these nutrients to regulate the digestive system — another key component for healthy skin.

“The skin is the body's largest eliminatory organ. When the ‘trash’ fails to leave the house, it accumulates and breaks down, decaying and putrefying,” Talbot said. “One of the body's simplest defense in removing toxic substances from within is through the pores. A healthy functioning digestive system means nutrients are more readily absorbed and waste is removed in desired routes.”

## SPF — Or Bust

Without a doubt, the most popular piece of advice experts were eager to share concerned sun protection. “Some judicious exposure is necessary for vitamin D synthesis unless oral supplements are taken,” Dr. Janet H. Prystowsky, told Medical Daily, “[but reducing] sun exposure will prevent skin cancers and pre-mature aging of the skin.”

Dr. Whitney Bowe agrees with Prystowski, frequently telling her patients applying sunscreen is like eating healthy or brushing your teeth — it’s simply part of a healthy lifestyle. When dermatologists say sun protection, they mean applying a broad-spectrum sunscreen of SPF 30 every single day, rain or shine, summer or winter, regardless of ethnicity.

“By protecting the skin from the harmful UVA and UVB rays, you’re not only safeguarding it from skin cancer, but also protecting it from wrinkles, fine lines, sun spots, hyper-pigmentation, and other signs of aging,” Dr. Eric Schweiger of [Schweiger Dermatology Group](#), told Medical Daily.

It’s not enough to apply it once either. Dr. Jeanine Downie, director of image Dermatology P.C., in Montclair, N.J., said sunblock needs to be reapplied every two hours. Her personal favorite is from [Skin Medica Daily Physical Defense](#).

## Moisturize

Did you know a majority of daily moisturizers are combined with SPF 30? Two birds, one healthy-looking stone. “I recommend my patients keep their combo-moisturizer right next to the toothpaste, so they’re reminded to apply it every day,” Dr. Joe Merola, a dermatologist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, told Medical Daily. “The moisturizer’s ingredients and SPF really compliment each other; it’s synergistic.”

When it comes to SPF, Dr. Merola is a fan of physical blocking sunscreen, which means the formula is made with non-chemical ingredients, like zinc oxide. Ultimately, it’ll come down to a patient's preference.

## Ease Up On Exfoliation

Fact: Removing dry, dead skin cells can help your skin better absorb your moisturizer, maximizing its benefits. However, exfoliating too much can be problematic. “Everyone thinks their skin needs to be scrubbed clean or the barrier needs to be removed for ‘healthy skin.’ This is simply not true,” Dr. Ben

Johnson, founder of [Osmosis Pur Medical Skincare](#), told Medical Daily. “The barrier of your skin protects you from environmental pollutants and the sun while holding in moisture better than any moisturizer on the market.”

There may be five total tips here, but the underlying solution for healthy skin is simply to care. Taking the time to figure out your skin type eliminates irrelevant products, and proper sun protection and diet benefits your overall health. Healthy, glowing skin is a mere bonus.



## Stephanie Castillo

Stephanie Castillo is an avid writer, runner, and snacker, though not at the same time. [read more](#)