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THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO VITAMINS IN SKIN CARE



“Take your vitamins” is a phrase that’s been ingrained in our brains from a young age. The importance of getting your daily dose of vitamins—whether through supplements or through food itself—cannot be understated. The same can be said for your skin. Vitamins are a huge part of skin care, each having unique benefits. But, if the ABC’s of vitamins in skin care seems confusing, we’re here to help. We chatted with Dr. Rebecca Kazin, board-certified dermatologist at the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery and faculty at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, to learn more about vitamins and skin care. Below, the ultimate skin care guide to vitamins A, B, C, and E.

Vitamin A

When found in foods, vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin that has been shown to help with vision, organ-function, and our immune systems. In skin care, vitamin A is known by a different name: retinol. Studies have shown that retinol can help with acne-prone skin and UV damage. Retinol is commonly found in anti-aging skin care products. Kazin shares that retinol can help increase surface skin turnover—by helping to remove dead skin cells—decrease the appearance of pores, and help slow down excessive oil production.

When looking to incorporate retinol into your skin care routine, Kazin warns to look for quality skin care products. “Every retinol is different,” she says. “Some [retinols] have a technology where the delivery system is better and time-released.” This means that the concentration of the ingredient doesn’t simply get dumped onto the skin at once, which she says can lead to irritation. Also remember that your skin needs to build up a tolerance to retinols and to start with a low concentration of the ingredient.

Vitamin B

When we think of B complex vitamins, biotin typically comes to mind. This vitamin is buzzed about in the hair industry since it’s believed to help strengthen strands.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C, or ascorbic acid, is a great way to incorporate antioxidants into your skin care routine. “Vitamin C neutralizes free radicals formed by pollution, smoking, and sun exposure,” Kazin says. Just like retinol, Kazin tells us that not every vitamin C found in skin care is the same. She says to look for stabilized concentrations or else the ingredient may irritate your skin. “Preparations should be in dark bottles to avoid exposure to light,” she says. Light exposure will break down the product, causing them to be less effective.

Vitamin E

“You’ll find vitamin E in a lot of soothing, replenishing balms,” Kazin says. Vitamin E can also help to protect surface skin and plays an important part in anti-aging skin care routines.