



You've probably heard of retinol. Okay, you've definitely heard of retinol, the magical skincare ingredient that's celebrated for smoothing wrinkles, fading spots, and restoring just about any type of skin to baby-soft status. But have you heard about bakuchiol—the most recent ingredient buzzing around the beauty community?

Pronounced "back-uh-heel," it's said to be a natural alternative to retinol. The powerful extract is found in the seeds and leaves of the babchi plant, which has been used in Chinese and Indian restorative medicine for years.

To get our facts straight about bakuchiol, we asked two New York City-based dermatologists, **Dr. Gary Goldenberg** of Goldenberg Dermatology and Dr. Kenneth Mark, a board-certified cosmetic dermatologist and Mohs' skin cancer surgeon, to give us the breakdown of this trendy ingredient.

What Is Bakuchiol?

So, what's the deal with this so-called revolutionary anti-ager? As we've learned, not every skincare trend is worth trying. (Yes, we're talking about the intense charcoal face mask that went viral for literally ripping people's skin off.)

Not to worry—according to Dr. Goldenberg, “bakuchiol is a plant-derived terpenophenol compound that's been shown to have anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties,” similar to those of retinol.

Like retinol, bakuchiol works to turn over skin cells, making room for newer, fresher, better-appearing cells to come to the top. It also pushes collagen (a skin-strengthening protein) to the surface for more elastic, youthful-looking skin.

In a 12-week study published in the *International Journal of Cosmetic Science* comparing retinol and bakuchiol, results showed “significant improvement in lines and wrinkles, pigmentation, elasticity, firmness and overall reduction in photo-damage,” without undesirable retinol side effects such as dryness and irritation when using bakuchiol. All the benefits of retinol without the downside—what's not to love?

Should You Use Bakuchiol?

The studies that have been conducted on bakuchiol show overwhelmingly positive results. Since it's both an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant ingredient, bakuchiol, "is good for dry and sensitive skin," Dr. Mark says.

"But it would be particularly beneficial for oily skin in that it has been found to be helpful for acne due to, again, its anti-inflammatory but also antibacterial properties," Dr. Mark adds.

When it comes to using bakuchiol, with or instead of retinol, it varies from person to person. According to Dr. Mark, "For those who can tolerate retinol there's no reason to use it as a replacement, but for those who can't tolerate retinol because of the associated dryness, irritation, redness, etc. then this is an excellent alternative."

Used in conjunction with a retinol-based serum or cream, bakuchiol can even boost the effectiveness of retinol with its natural anti-aging abilities. However Dr. Goldenberg is more skeptical, saying that while the existing research is encouraging, more clinical studies need to be done to support the use of bakuchiol, especially as a replacement for the anti-aging holy grail.

So, What's The Verdict?

Since it's new to dermatology, Dr. Goldenberg is wary of recommending bakuchiol to patients just yet without further research, but Dr. Mark is behind the natural skin-renewing extract, recommending it once or twice a day in your normal skincare routine. However, with any new skincare regimen, people should be careful to test ingredients on their skin.

"It is plant-based and like almost anything, there are bound to be some people allergic or sensitive to it," says Dr. Mark.

Being the skincare junkie that I am, I'm ready to test out the beauty industry's latest obsession. And with the cautious support of a certified and honored NY-based dermatologist, I'm willing to take the risk, especially if it means keeping my skin firm and wrinkle-free as long as possible.

Scroll on to check out a few of my top bakuchiol products, and always check with your personal dermatologist for advice if you're unsure about adding a new ingredient to your routine.



Biossance Squalane + Phyto-Retinol Serum, \$78, Sephora



Dr. Mark's Top Pick: Ao Skincare Repair Night Cream, \$90. Ao Skincare



Omorovicza Miracle Facial Oil, \$120. Sephora