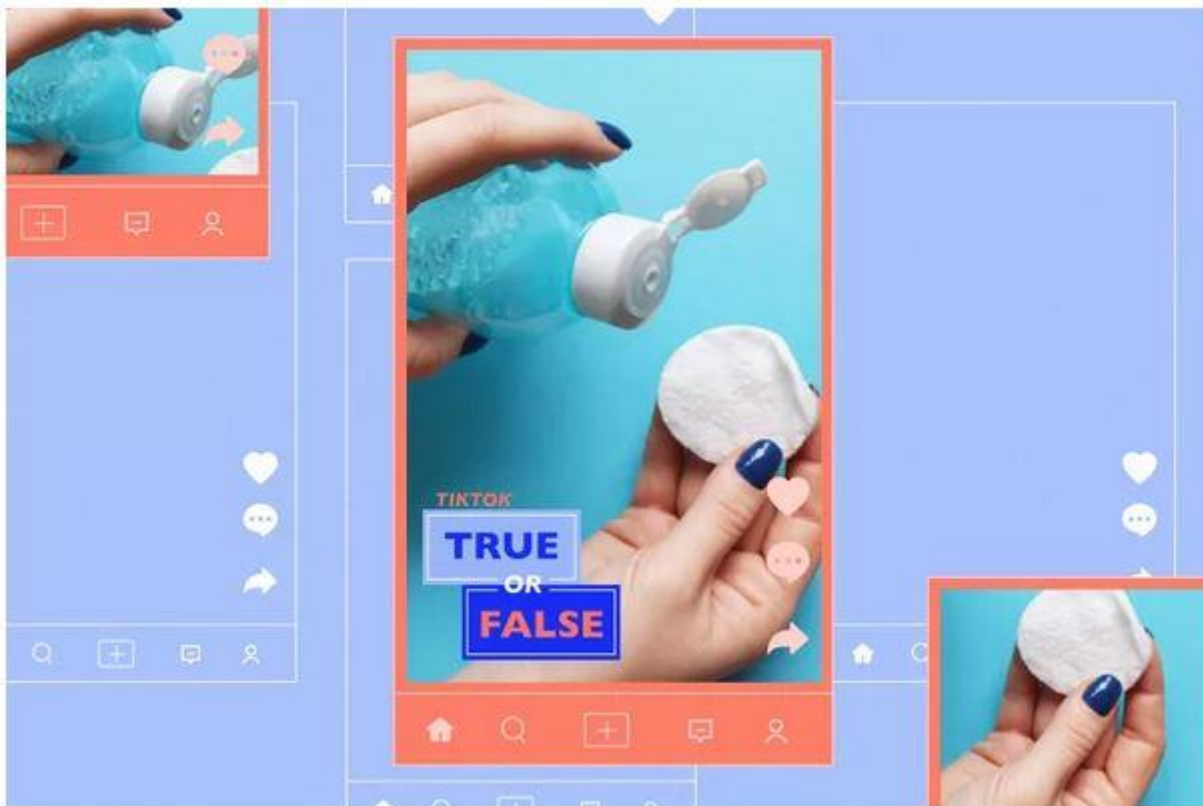


SHAPE

TikTok Users Think Everyone's Been Using Micellar Wrong This Whole Time

Some people are finding new ways to use the beauty staple, and dermatologists have thoughts.

By [Korin Miller](#) | Published on December 6, 2022



Micellar water is a popular choice when it comes to makeup removal, but according to a slew of people on TikTok, you might be using it all wrong.

Most people use micellar water by dabbing the product on a cotton ball or cotton round and then applying it to their face. But some TikTokers suggest applying micellar water to a cotton round and blowing on the saturated cotton round to create a ball of foam. Then, they use that foam to remove makeup and cleanse the face.

The trend seemingly originated with a video from TikTok user @saragomez.13 that currently has more than one million views. In the snippet, she blows on a micellar water-soaked cotton round to make foam. "What if...I told you we've been using our micellar water wrong this whole time?" reads text displayed on top of the clip. "This makes removing makeup easier," she adds in another text box.

Plenty of other TikTokers have since given the hack a try. Many seem both surprised and excited by the results. "You've been using micellar water wrong!" wrote one TikToker. "I was today year's old when..." wrote another.

You can spot Garnier's SkinActive Micellar Cleansing Water in many similar clips. But for the record: Instructions for use on the bottle make no mention of how to foam up the product. So, is this really a thing? And is it even safe to be bubbling up your micellar water? Ahead, dermatologists weigh in on the beauty trend.

What is micellar water?

Backing up a second here, micellar water is a solution that's usually used to remove makeup. "Micellar water was created as a substitute for cleansing makeup without the drying components in regular tap water," explains board-certified dermatologist Ife J. Rodney, M.D., founding director of Eternal Dermatology Aesthetics and professor of dermatology at Howard University and George Washington University.

"It combines purified water and a few key compounds called surfactants," explains Dr. Rodney. (A surfactant, in case you're not familiar with it, is any chemical compatible with water and oil that's used for trapping and clearing dirt.) "When placed in water in specific concentrations, these surfactants create micelles, tiny spherical clusters that bind to oil and dirt on your skin," says Dr. Rodney.

Overall, micellar water is a "gentle cleanser" that's also usually hydrating, adds New York-based board-certified dermatologist **Gary Goldenberg, M.D.**, founder of Goldenberg Dermatology.

"In other words, micellar water is a somewhat clever way of marketing and positioning soap water," says Dr. Rodney. Yep, that's pretty much all it is.

Does foaming micellar work?

There are a few things to dissect here. The first is whether you can actually make foam by blowing on a micellar water-soaked cotton round and yes, that part is definitely legit, according to Dr. Rodney. "It's the same chemistry involved when you blow into a bubble wand or when suds develop in your washing machine," she says. "Water is trapped between pockets of the surfactants. When you add air, the soap molecules move to give space to the air, creating tiny bubbles of soap (foam)." The more air and micellar water you add, the more foam you can create, she adds.

Okay, but does the foamy consistency make the micellar water work any better? Sadly, this is a no. "Any bubbles formed by blowing on the micellar water should not change the efficacy or tolerability of the product itself," says Joshua Zeichner, M.D., director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City.

"This trend is really more for entertainment and does not change the contents at all of the micellar water," says Cindy Wassef, M.D., assistant professor at the *Rutgers* Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. "It is a common misconception that when you wash your face you need that foamy feeling to be clean. You can still be just as cleansed without the foam."

What's more, all the foam could lead you to use up the product faster than you would otherwise. "Since the foam is activated and feels much lighter, you may end up using a bit more to get the best results," says Dr. Rodney.

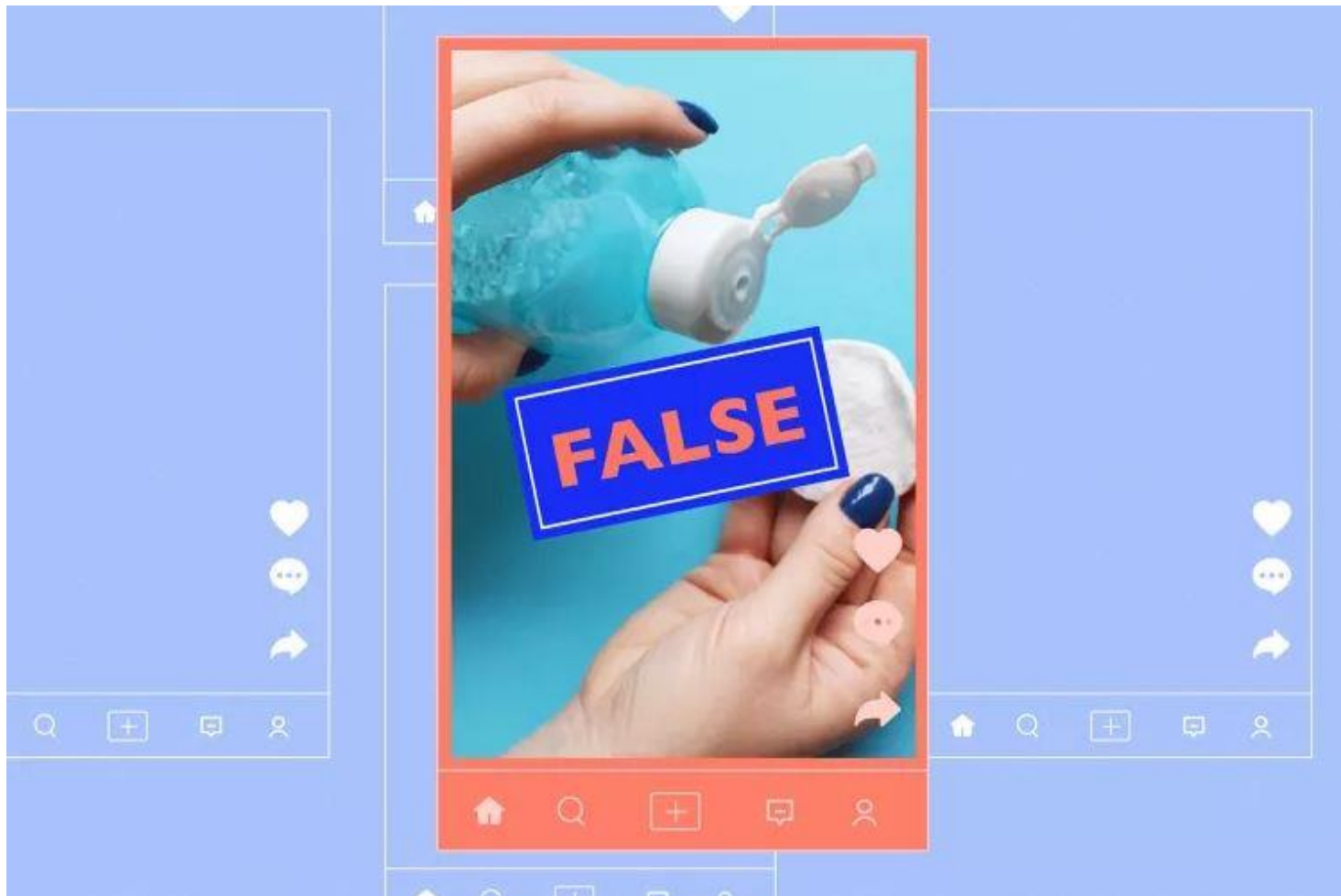
Is foaming micellar water with your mouth safe?

Just to recap: People are pouring a solution that's supposed to be used on the surface of skin onto a cotton round and then touching it with their mouths. Regardless of how efficient the method is for cleaning skin, is that really safe?

While you're unlikely to keel over if you try this micellar water hack, experts say it's probably not the smartest to do it regularly. "Micellar water is not supposed to be ingested, so I would be careful when applying it to your mouth on a cotton pad that contents are not dripping in your mouth," says Dr. Wassef.

You could also unintentionally contaminate your cotton swap with bacteria and raise the (admittedly low) risk of developing a skin infection, says Dr. Rodney. "As a precaution, it's best not to transfer any potential bacteria from the mouth to the cotton pad or foam before applying it to the face," she says.

Foaming micellar water makes it cleanse skin better: True or false?



If you're looking to create a cool video to share on social media, then by all means give this trend a shot and catch it on camera. But if you're trying to clean your face more effectively, you're just fine to use micellar water the old-fashioned way, according to dermatologists.

"If you like foam, this is something fun to do with your micellar water," says Dr. Wassef. "But it will not change its overall benefits for you."