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# The Skincare Dictionary: Every Ingredient Explained

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When it comes to skincare, it seems like the number of serum, face cream, and oil offerings (and claims) on store shelves are ever-growing — because they are. In 2019, skincare brought in nearly \$5.9 billion in sales and outpaced makeup growth by 12%, according to the NPD Group, a market research company. And according to Google Trends, searches for "skincare" reached an all-time high in January 2020, and that popularity has only continued to spike through this year.

The skincare boom has understandably brought an onslaught of new ingredients, each sounding better than the next (and some sounding downright insane). In a fast-changing world of vampire facials and snail mucin face masks, the question is: Which ingredients are actually worth the hype, and which will work for your lifestyle, your skin type, and your skincare goals?

To demystify the endless catalog, we consulted our **Good Housekeeping Institute Beauty Lab chemists and scientists and over 20 top dermatologists** from New York City to San Francisco, Miami, and back again. Of the best and buzziest, we've broken down exactly what you need to know, including the ingredients that play nice together (and which ones don't), the best actives for staving off acne, anti-aging must-haves to brighten and resurface skin, soothing, hydrating fixes for sensitive skin, and go-to products for every skin type.

Through the peaks and valleys of skincare trends, these are the tried-and-true ingredients that have stood the test of time and are worth adding to your skincare regimen, plus how to use them:

## Acne-Fighters + Exfoliators

If you struggle with persistent acne or have oily skin, these clarifying ingredients are for you. They help to mattify shine, degunk pores, and slough away dead skin and bacteria for a clearer, brighter complexion that's free of whiteheads, blackheads, and the rest. Start slow with these powerful ingredients and avoid using in tandem off the bat.

## Anti-Agers

These heavy-hitting ingredients smooth out wrinkles and fine lines by ramping up collagen production and cellular turnover for youthful, bright-looking, even-toned skin. Since skin will be freshly exfoliated, it may feel irritated at first: Start slow, avoid using alongside other exfoliants, and *always* follow up with SPF!

## Hydrators + Skin Soothers

If your skin is dry, sensitive, prone to redness, or plagued by eczema, these calming, nourishing hydrators will be your saviors. Use them alone and/or immediately following any exfoliation regimen (above!).

## Skin Oils

Face oils are the cherry on top of any skincare regimen, and there's one out there for every type of skin. Use them solo, mix them into a moisturizer, or press them onto skin as the last step of your nighttime routine for glowing, nourished skin.

*Our experts:*

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- *Caren Campbell, M.D., San Francisco-based dermatologist.*
- *Stacy Chimento, M.D., dermatologist at Riverchase Dermatology in Miami Beach, Florida.*
- *Loretta Ciraldo, M.D., F.A.A.D., a board-certified dermatologist and co-founder of Dr. Loretta Skincare.*
- *Alan Durkin, M.D., board-certified plastic surgeon in Vero Beach, Florida affiliated with BABOR.*
- *Paul Jarrod Franka, M.D., cosmetic dermatologist and Chief Medical Officer and founder of PFRANKMD.*
- *Mona Gohara, M.D., dermatologist and associate clinical professor at Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, CT.*
- **Gary Goldenberg, M.D.,** *medical director of Mount Sinai Dermatology Faculty Practice*
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- *Hadley King, M.D., board-certified dermatologist in NYC.*
- *Craig A. Kraffert, M.D., board certified dermatologist and president of Amarte Skin Care.*
- *Jessica Krant, M.D., board-certified dermatologist of the Laser & Skin Surgery Center of New York*
- *Sandra Lee, M.D., board-certified dermatologist and founder of SLMD Skincare.*
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