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BY
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SKIN S.O.S.

Controlling inflammation isn't just
key to being your healthiest self...it's
essential for glowy skin too.

GETTY IMAGES (FIRE ALARM); PHILIPP JELENSKA (WOMAN, NEXT PAGE AND FOLLOWING SPREAD)



YOUR SKIN ON THE I-WORD

Inflammation is the way your entire body, skin included, responds to injury from both internal and external aggressors, says dermatologist Rachel Nazarian, MD. With it comes oxidative stress, resulting in the formation of free radicals that break down collagen and elastin and damage skin cells by causing mutations in their DNA, explains dermatologist Kristina Goldenberg, MD. Damaged cells become abnormal, manifesting as wrinkles, hyperpigmentation, breakouts—and in some cases, cancer, says Dr. Goldenberg.

SKINFLAMMATION TRIGGER YOUR ENVIRONMENT

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UVA and UVB Rays

They're enemy number one when it comes to free-radical damage—and the primary cause of skin aging and, more seriously, skin cancer. Commit to wearing SPF every day, rain or shine, even if you're spending only five minutes outside. (Sun damage is cumulative, and every little bit counts.) Chanel's version here contains SPF 50, antioxidants, and a skin-perfecting tint.

Chanel Super CC Cream, \$55, chanel.com



Infrared Radiation

You know that heat you feel while sitting in a sauna or using your blow-dryer? That's IR, which produces free-radical damage that can cause dullness and hyperpigmentation. No need to give up these habits; just be sure to do your skin-care routine beforehand. An antioxidant serum (like this vitamin C one from Dermalogica) will help combat the effects.

Dermalogica BioLumin-C Serum, \$87, dermalogica.com



HEV Light

Research shows that prolonged exposure to high-energy visible light (the blue light emitted by most smart devices) can trigger an inflammatory response in skin, leading to things like dark spots and wrinkles, says derm Shereene Idriss, MD. Two ways to shield your skin (without going on a digital detox): BareMinerals' SPF 30 (it has antioxidants specifically targeting HEV) and Estée Lauder's vitamin E anti-aging eye cream.

BareMinerals Complexion Rescue Defense Radiant Protective Veil, \$39, bareminerals.com; **Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair Eye Supercharged Complex Synchronized Recovery**, \$62, esteelauder.com



Pollution

Microscopic bits of dirt, dust, soot, and smog are small enough to enter pores and create inflammation, says derm Shari Marchbein, MD. Your best defense: Clinique's moisturizer (it creates an invisible barrier over skin to keep pollutants from penetrating pores) and Simple Skincare's anti-pollution mask, which has vitamin B₃ to combat free-radical damage.

Clinique Dramatically Different Hydrating Jelly, \$28, clinique.com; **Simple Skincare Anti-Pollution Sheet Mask**, \$3, at drugstores



MASK HACK

If your clay treatment feels tight and crackly, it's a sign you've left it on too long. You want to wash off clay formulas before they become fully dry and end up stripping away moisture and damaging your skin barrier. A goof-proof option: **Olay Masks Glow Boost Clay Stick** (\$10, at drugstores), which stays creamy on skin thanks to hydrating glycerin.



WHEN INFLAMMATION IS YOUR FRIEND

What do pro laser treatments, peels, and microneedling have in common? They use inflammation, in a controlled way (unlike UV and pollution), to improve skin texture. "These cosmetic treatments create acute, targeted micro-injuries in the skin that prompt cell renewal and collagen production," explains Dr. Goldenberg.

SKINFLAMMATION TRIGGER YOUR SKIN-CARE HABITS

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Foaming Washes

Sulfates (cleansing agents that lather) can strip your protective barrier, allowing impurities like dirt and bacteria to easily enter the skin and generate free radicals. Stick with gentle cream cleansers and rinse with cool water (hot water can aggravate skin), adds Dr. Nazarian.

Cleansing Tools

Used incorrectly or too frequently, cleansing brushes and exfoliating mitts can create microtears in the skin, leading to redness and irritation, says Dr. Nazarian. Use with light pressure and lots of water, and follow the directions on the package. (Some are meant to be used daily, others just once a week.)

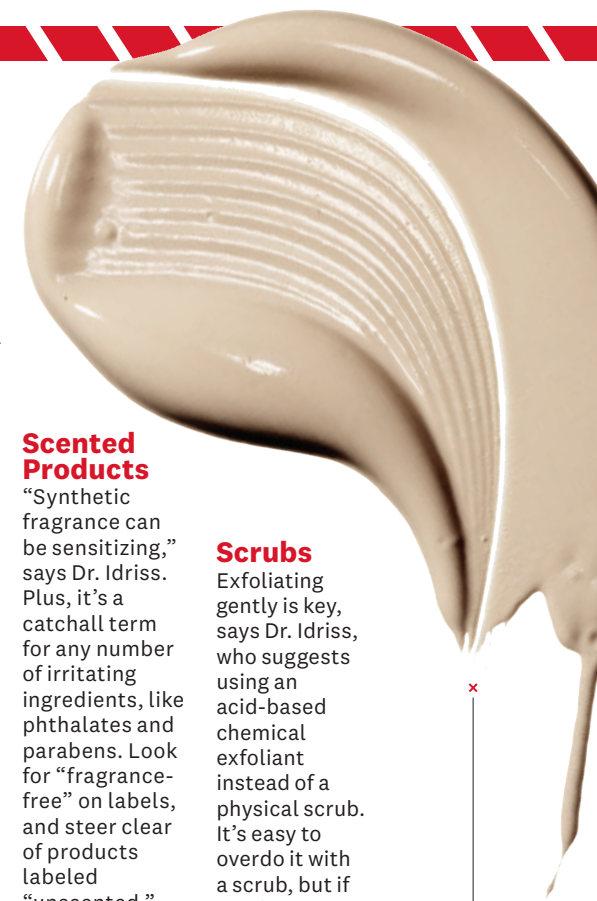
Scented Products

"Synthetic fragrance can be sensitizing," says Dr. Idriss. Plus, it's a catchall term for any number of irritating ingredients, like phthalates and parabens. Look for "fragrance-free" on labels, and steer clear of products labeled "unscented." (It just means the formula is odorless, not that it doesn't have synthetic fragrance.)

Scrubs

Exfoliating gently is key, says Dr. Idriss, who suggests using an acid-based chemical exfoliant instead of a physical scrub. It's easy to overdo it with a scrub, but if you follow the directions when using a chemical version (we like StriVectin's, above) there is less chance of error or irritation, says Dr. Idriss.

StriVectin Advanced Acid Resurface Glycolic Skin Reset Mask, \$59, strivectin.com



Vitamins

HEALTHY-SKIN

Think of these as Flintstones for your face:
They help keep aging in check.
+ PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEFFREY WESTBROOK



1. VITAMIN A
Known as retinol, it smooths skin texture by speeding up your skin-cell turnover process and increasing collagen production, says derm Joshua Zeichner, MD.

Elizabeth Arden
Retinol Ceramide Capsules Line Erasing Night Serum, \$84, elizabetharden.com

2. VITAMIN B
Niacinamide (a.k.a. vitamin B₃) can brighten your tone and minimize break-outs “by regulating both pigment and sebum production,” says celeb facialist Renée Rouleau.

Mary Kay TimeWise Age Minimize 3D 4-in-1 Cleanser, \$24, marykay.com

3. VITAMIN C
Fade dark spots and hyperpigmentation with this antioxidant. It suppresses melanin activity (both lightening pigment and preventing it from forming) and stops existing spots from getting darker, says Rouleau.

Farmacy Bright On Massage-Activated Vitamin C Mask, \$38, sephora.com

4. VITAMIN D
Applied topically, this antioxidant can help protect skin from environmental aggressors like UV rays and pollution, says Dr. Zeichner.

Murad Multi-Vitamin Infusion Oil, \$72, murad.com

5. VITAMIN E
Dry, dehydrated skin loves E's nourishing and moisturizing effects. This mask “has emollient properties that help smooth rough, scaly patches,” says Rouleau.

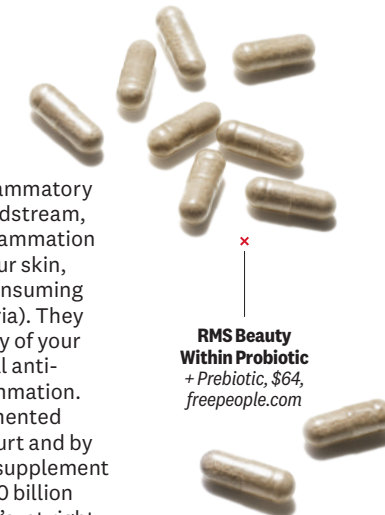
Tatcha Luminous Dewy Skin Mask, \$12, tatcha.com

SKINFLAMMATION TRIGGER AN UNHEALTHY DIET

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Processed foods slow digestion, and the resulting stagnation causes an overgrowth of unhealthy bacteria in the gut, says derm Whitney Bowe, MD. This can lead to “leaky gut,” a

condition that allows inflammatory bacteria to enter the bloodstream, creating system-wide inflammation that negatively affects your skin, Dr. Bowe says. The fix? Consuming probiotics (“good” bacteria). They help maintain the integrity of your gut lining, serve as natural antibiotics, and control inflammation. Get your fix by eating fermented foods like kimchi and yogurt and by popping a daily probiotic supplement (ideally one with at least 10 billion CFU). We like RMS Beauty's, at right.



RMS Beauty
Within Probiotic
+ Prebiotic, \$64,
freepeople.com



THE ULTIMATE SENSITIVE-SKIN SAVIOR CICA CREAMS

These trendy moisturizers get their name from their hero ingredient, *Centella asiatica*. The antioxidant-rich herb has repairing and regenerating properties that strengthen the skin barrier (protecting you from stressors like pollution), reduce redness and irritation, and even fight signs of aging.

TRY: L'Oréal Paris Revitalift Cicacream, \$18, at drugstores;
Kiehl's Dermatologist Solutions Centella Sensitive Cica-Cream, \$43, kiehls.com