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Advice from a dermatologist

How to hydrate and protect your skin for summer

Provided by L'Oreal ACD

The human body is comprised of up to 60% water , depending on your fat-to-muscle ratio, and the skin is no exception. Skin cells need the proper level of hydration to function optimally, which is why it is important to provide your skin with a steady stream of moisture, regardless of your skin type.

“By hydrating the skin, and especially the outer layer, one can improve the cosmetic appearance of fine lines and wrinkles,” said Dr. Gary Goldenberg, a New York City dermatologist.

Light layers

Just as heat and humidity call for lighter layers of clothing, the same goes for skin care. “Heavy moisturizers aren’t recommended for most during summer months,” Goldenberg said. “A heavy moisturizer combined with sweating and higher humidity can clog pores and cause worsening of acne.” That is when gel-based moisturizers come in. “These products are usually absorbed more rapidly than a cream, and are ideal when applying makeup after moisturizing or for avoiding a greasy feel,” he said.

Finding the right ingredients

There is a wide array of hydrating ingredients available in moisturizers today, but one ingredient stands out from the pack. “Hyaluronic acid is an important component of the dermis, the middle layer of the skin,” Goldenberg said. Topical hyaluronic acid can help plump up the skin and decrease the appearance of fine wrinkles and lines, especially around the eyes and mouth.”

Goldenberg also believes in the benefits of thermal water. “Rich in minerals and antioxidants, thermal water has been used for centuries,” he said. “Antioxidants should be part of everyone’s skin care routine, and a combination of thermal water and hyaluronic acid can be a powerful way to fight lines and wrinkles while improving overall skin hydration and health.”

Round out your skin care routine

Summer is synonymous with sweat, so an on-the-go cleansing solution like a micellar water is key. “Generally gentle and safe, these products help remove sweat, pollutants and debris,” Goldenberg said. You can also use micellar water as your regular cleanser at home.

Goldenberg also said overnight hydration is key for healthy-looking skin. “As we rest, night cream helps moisturize and rejuvenate our skin,” he said. This is also the ideal time for a thicker product, since cosmetic appearance and applying makeup isn’t as important. Dr. Goldenberg reminds us, “Don’t forget to wash your face in the morning and apply a lighter moisturizer plus sunscreen.”

Regardless of season, no conversation about skin care is complete without sunscreen. “I advise all my patients to wear sunscreen 365 days a year, even on cloudy days and during the winter months because UV-induced damage causes long-term problems such as skin cancer and visible signs of aging like lines, wrinkles, sagging and an overall sullen appearance of the skin,” he said. This is especially important during the summer, and Goldenberg recommends at least SPF 30 daily, and SPF 50 or more when at the beach or exercising outdoors. “Also be sure to look for a water-resistant product that covers UVA and UVB rays” so you are protected even while sweating, he said.

The bottom line

Hydrating and protecting the skin is key for optimal health and appearance, and this can be easily accomplished when you cover the basics with an easy-to-use cleanser, lightweight daytime moisturizer, sunscreen and night cream. Just as you tailor your wardrobe for summer weather, your skin care routine requires a few adjustments to compensate for the changes in temperature and humidity as well.