

# Everything You Need To Know About Fulvic Acid—And Why It Deserves A Spot In Your Skincare Routine

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Fulvic acid is a gentle, non-exfoliating acid that is known for its anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and antioxidant properties.

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From hyaluronic, glycolic, and salicylic to azelaic, hypochlorous and polyhydroxy, acids have taken over our collective skincare routines and there's no sign of slowing down. Lurking under the radar among these heavy hitters is fulvic acid.

Part of the humic substances family, fulvic acid is a group of naturally occurring compounds formed by the breakdown of organic matter in soil. It's typically derived from natural sources like peat, clay, mud, even mountain rocks.

Farmers have long relied on fulvic acid for its ability to help plants absorb nutrients more readily. However, its foray into skincare is more recent.

So, what exactly does it do for your skin? How do you use it? And perhaps more importantly, is it safe? Here's the scoop on one of the most underrated skincare acids:

## What Fulvic Acid Does For Your Skin

Despite its humble origin as a dirt extract, fulvic acid packs quite a punch. Let's take a look at some of its key skincare benefits:

### Reduces Inflammation

Fulvic acid is naturally anti-inflammatory and mildly antimicrobial, which may help calm redness and reduce breakouts by keeping acne-causing bacteria in check, says Dr. Mollie Kelly Tufman, biochemist and founder of [The Beauty Lab](#).

A [small, randomized double-blind study](#) published in the journal *Clinical, Cosmetic and Investigational Dermatology* found that topical fulvic acid significantly improved eczema symptoms, including severity.

### Supports Skin Barrier

Besides calming inflammation, fulvic acid can also help maintain the skin's natural pH and support microbiome, which together improve skin

barrier function, says [Dr. Gary Goldenberg](#), assistant clinical professor of dermatology at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai.

Additionally, fulvic acid contains a whole cocktail of phenolic acids, trace minerals like magnesium and zinc, amino acids, and small peptides, notes Dr. Tufman. These antioxidant-rich micronutrients help speed up skin healing and repair while fortifying skin's natural defenses against oxidative stress. Oxidative stress, as you may already know, is a major culprit behind barrier damage, pigmentation, collagen breakdown, and premature aging.

## Gentler Alternative To Vitamin C

[Vitamin C](#) is an antioxidant powerhouse. But it can sometimes be too harsh for sensitive skin, causing irritation or redness. According to board-certified dermatologist [Dr. Shannon Humphrey](#), fulvic acid's antioxidant profile makes it an effective gentler alternative that offers similar protection against environmental stressors like UV rays, dust, and pollution.

## Enhances Nutrient Absorption

Fulvic acid has a small molecular size, which makes it easier to absorb into the skin and deliver nutrients more efficiently. It also helps improve absorption of other ingredients and pairs particularly well with hyaluronic acid, niacinamide, and peptides without increasing the risk of irritation, says [Dr. Nathan Newman](#), board-certified dermatologist and cosmetic surgeon in Beverly Hills.

That said, both Dr. Tufman and Dr. Humphrey emphasize that more research is needed on fulvic acid in skincare, even though early studies look promising.

## How Safe Is Fulvic Acid For Skin

According to Dr. Goldenberg, fulvic acid is generally well tolerated, even by sensitive, acne- or rosacea-prone skin.

“Based on the limited available data, fulvic acid appears to have a strong safety profile,” Dr. Humphrey agrees.

Even so, both experts caution against using it without consulting a dermatologist if you have active flare-ups, a compromised skin barrier, or very reactive skin.

The bigger concern, however, isn’t the ingredient itself but how it’s sourced, as fulvic acid products aren’t standardized or well-regulated.

“Fulvic acid comes from soil and sediment, so if a brand isn’t purifying it properly, you could be dealing with trace heavy metals, microbes, or other contaminants,” explains Dr. Tufman. To ensure you’re using a high-quality product, she recommends buying only from a reputable brand that clearly discloses formulation and provides third-party testing results.

## How To Use Fulvic Acid In Skincare

If you’re looking to add fulvic acid to your skincare routine, here’s the best way to do it safely, according to experts:

- **Patch test first:** Like with any skincare product, do a patch test before using it on your face to check for any skin reactions, suggests Dr. Elle H. de Moll, board-certified medical dermatologist and founder of [Elite Dermatology Physicians](#).
- **Start slowly:** While fulvic acid is considered safe to use daily, start by using it once per week and increase from there, suggests Dr. Goldenberg. Also, avoid using it alongside other new products. “If there’s a reaction, it will be difficult to know which product is irritating the skin,” he explains.
- **Choose the right formula:** Fulvic acid is water-soluble and tends to be most effective in lightweight, leave-on formulas (e.g., serums, masks, or toners), says Dr. Tufman. Additionally, look for it in the first half of the ingredient list. “That usually means you’re getting an amount that actually does something,” she notes.
- **Add it to your A.M. routine:** “I typically recommend applying it in the morning, when its antioxidant benefits can help shield the skin

from environmental stressors throughout the day,” says Dr. Newman. But that doesn’t mean it can’t be used in the evening. Ultimately, the most important factor is consistency, whether you use it in the morning or at bedtime, he says.

- **Avoid pairing it with strong actives:** While fulvic acid is gentle and generally non-reactive, Dr. Newman recommends caution when combining it with potent actives such as glycolic, lactic, or salicylic acids or retinoids like retinol or tretinoin, as it could raise the risk of irritation.

Lastly, remember that whenever you upgrade your skincare routine, introduce only one change at a time to avoid overwhelming your skin, Dr. de Moll advises.

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