



## Learn How to Choose the Skincare Products Best Suited for Your Skin

### Description

Reading the ingredients list on skincare products can be like reading a foreign language unless you have a background in Latin or a degree in chemistry. That language is known as the International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients.

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It's similar to what you might recall from early science lessons where you learnt about the scientific method. The INCI exists to assist in the development of an uniform language of ingredient names that will be used on labels all around the world. Unfortunately, it is not very user-friendly.

Finding the correct skincare products with the perfect components for your skin requires a personalized approach. This takes a little more effort, and yes, reading the ingredients list is required, but it's well worth it.

Fortunately for you, we spoke with dermatologists to make the whole thing a little less daunting. With some of this knowledge under your belt, you may be a more confident shopper, hopefully avoiding

reactive skin disasters while trying out new goods in the future.

## Learn about your skin type.

According to cosmetic physician Michele Green, MD, the most crucial aspect in selecting which skincare products will work best for you is your skin type. “There are no terrible products necessarily,” Dr. Green explains, “but occasionally people with various skin types use the wrong product for their type of skin.”

You may have guessed it already, but people with acne-prone or sensitive skin should be especially cautious when it comes to the substances in their skincare products. To all of you with oily skin, congratulations: you are the winners here: Oily skin can tolerate a broader range of substances that can cause breakouts or irritation in other skin types.

Dr. Green recommends the following components for various skin types:

Look for products containing alpha hydroxy acids (glycolic acid or salicylic acid), benzoyl peroxide, and hyaluronic acid if you have oily skin. “These substances are helpful at controlling excess sebum production, while hyaluronic acid provides moisture only where it is needed,” Dr. Green notes.

Look for products containing shea butter and lactic acid if you have dry skin. Dr. Green states, “These compounds give moisture and gentle exfoliation to keep dry skin looking bright.”

Look for products containing aloe vera, oats, and shea butter if you have sensitive skin. “They’re fantastic moisturizers and don’t normally cause breakouts,” Dr. Green says.

If you’re not sure what skin type you have, it’s recommended visiting a dermatologist to find out. Once you’ve determined your skin type, you can begin picking products with greater precision.

## Don’t believe the hype.

“Packaging and popularity are often easy traps that we fall into,” Dr. David explains. “We shouldn’t put too much weight or worth into what we choose for what’s beneficial for our skin.” If you’re going to buy a product based on a suggestion from a friend or influencer, consider not only how fantastic their skin looks now, but also what type of skin they had to begin with. This will provide you with a more reliable indication of how well the product will function for you.

In recent years, cult-favorite products such as the St. Ives Apricot Scrub and a number of Mario Badescu lotions have faced litigation from customers who had major adverse reactions. There’s no need to fear if you have some of these goods in your cosmetics drawer at home; this doesn’t mean they’re harmful to everyone. However, the backlash against some of these famous skincare businesses and products serves as a reminder that just because something is popular doesn’t imply it’s popular for the right reasons or that it’s the appropriate product for you.

## Ingredients to look for

- Glycerin
- Hyaluronic acid and ceramides
- L-Ascorbic acid (vitamin C) (Vitamin C)
- Vitamin C, specifically L-ascorbic acid, is an antioxidant that acts to counteract UV-induced damage and boost collagen formation.
- Tocopherol (Vitamin E) (Vitamin E)
- Retinol
- Niacinamide (vitamin B3) (Vitamin B3)

## Avoiding Ingredients

- Fragrance/parfum

Added perfumes have a high likelihood of triggering skin allergies and irritation, so avoid them if you have sensitive skin.

- Sulfates

Sulfates are cleaning chemicals that are frequently found in body washes and shampoo. They deplete the natural oil in the hair and skin, causing discomfort.

- Parabens

Parabens are often used as a chemical preservative in items to prevent bacterial growth. They're known as estrogen mimickers, according to Dr. David and other industry experts, and they can be dangerous over time by disrupting hormonal balance. Both Dr. David and Dr. Green warn that this can be particularly dangerous for young children and women at risk of breast cancer.

- Formaldehyde, as well as formaldehyde releasers

Formaldehyde is no longer commonly shown in ingredient lists because it is a proven carcinogen. However, Dr. David says that it is frequently replaced with substances with various names (quarternium-15, DMDM hydantoin, diazolidine urea, imidazolidine urea) that release formaldehyde over time and work as preservatives. According to Dr. David, it hasn't been shown whether or not these compounds are hazardous in this capacity, but it's worth keeping an eye out for them as potential allergies.

## Natural may not always imply superior.

Although seeing familiar words in the ingredients list can be reassuring, it does not always imply the safest path to choose. Dr. David, for example, notes that poison ivy is a natural oil, but it's not one you want to massage all over your skin. "I see patients come in fairly frequently with responses to natural essential oils," Dr. David adds. "It's one of those things where everyone is unique and you need to do what's best for yourself specifically."

She also warns that seeing the labels natural and organic on a product label is sometimes just a marketing ploy. Because those phrases are not regulated and have no industry norms, they can make

bogus claims. Furthermore, a product may be branded as natural if only one or two of the substances on the list are natural.

## **Take note of the order of the components.**

Once you've determined the major ingredients you want to avoid or pursue, you'll want to pay attention to where they appear on the ingredients list. Dr. David recommends looking at the first five ingredients as a good rule of thumb, as they often account for around 80% of the product's content.

Ingredients will be mentioned in order of highest to lowest concentration, so if one of the first five ingredients is problematic or potentially unpleasant, you should avoid that product. Similarly, if you're looking for certain ingredients in a product, but those ingredients are only listed at the end, the product isn't worth your money. You won't notice the benefits of the substances at the end of the list because they make up such a little fraction of the entire product.

## **Don't be alarmed by the lengthy ingredient list.**

When it comes to the food we eat, we're trained to look for a shorter, more recognized ingredient list. While a shorter list may be easier to understand, it may not always suffice in terms of what you want to receive out of your skincare products.

When looking for anti-aging benefits or investing in medical-grade skincare products, the ingredients list will inevitably grow lengthier. And, according to Dr. David, this should not deter you. Instead, seek some assistance—either from a dermatologist or from technology—to assess whether the product is a suitable fit for you.

## **Make use of your resources.**

You don't have to be a walking dictionary to choose skincare products that have the proper ingredients. Take advantage of online resources to make things a little simpler on yourself. Dr. David recommends two online databases for researching ingredients and products: EWG's Skin Deep database and CosDNA.

The EWG Skin Deep database is only one of their many internet offerings. The Environmental Working Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to environmental and human health research and education. Skincare products are assessed and graded in the Skin Deep database based on a variety of variables, ranging from manufacturing procedures to potential health dangers.

CosDNA is a no-frills database that delves even further into a product's ingredients, outlining their unique functions and safety ratings.

## **Always perform a patch test.**

A patch test is a good idea in your product elimination procedure. (Plus, it's a wonderful reason to go to Ulta or Sephora without spending a fortune.) It's time to put those test items to use.

A patch test can help assess whether certain products or components will cause allergic reactions, irritation, or clogging of your pores. "I think the take-home message is: if it's hurting your skin or making it worse, stop using it; it's not the correct product for you," Dr. Green adds.

It takes a bit more effort at initially to test all of your ingredients before committing to them, but it can save you a lot of money and heartache in the long run.

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