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*the*  
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High-tech formulas now promise to restore the skin's natural lipid barrier—so your skin is given an extra layer of protection against the big, bad world of pollution.



# *magic of* *moisturizers*

**New high-tech products deliver results  
no one thought possible two years ago**

Moisturizers may promise the fountain of youth, but the experience of shopping for them can seem more like a sea of confusion. The good news is that while the goal of most moisturizers is still to improve suppleness and reverse dryness, the technology used to achieve these goals has improved dramatically. The result, says Mary P. Lupo, M.D., an associate clinical professor of dermatology at Tulane University, is a whole new category of products that not only moisturize more effectively but can help to protect the skin from environmental and free-radical damage, too.

## ***the science behind the new moisturizers***

Most skin-care experts believe that no matter what kind of skin you have—from very dry to combination or oily—you need to guard it against moisture loss. “Just because you have oily skin doesn’t mean you don’t need a moisturizer,” explains John Szveda, manager of product development at Erno Laszlo. “Oil is actually sebum, and sebum itself is not a good moisturizer.” Skin-care companies usually offer moisturizers in two formulations: creams (for dry skin) and lighter lotions (for oilier and combination skin). Those with really oily skin, however, should stick to one of the many new oil-free moisturizers because “certain oils may exacerbate acne,” says **Debra Price, M.D.**, a Miami-based dermatologist and clinical assistant professor of dermatology at the University of Miami. Some of the most sophisticated oil-free products, such as Erno Laszlo’s Antioxidant Moisture Complex, Estée Lauder’s DayWear and Cabot’s Multi-Vitamin Facial Moisturizer, are recommended for all skin types. Keep in mind that whatever your needs, you may use more or less moisturizer depending on the season and climate where you live.

by Hilary Stern

photographs by  
Michael Zeppetello

The elimination of heavy mineral oils isn’t the only thing that’s changed about the new breed of moisturizers.

One reason why they work so well is that many contain ingredients such as lipids and essential fatty acids that are found within the skin’s own cellular structure. Barrier lipids, which include ceramides, make up about 40 percent of the skin’s outer layer and work to bind the skin together, forming a kind of protective barrier. “They’re the glue that holds the skin together so the environment can’t get in and moisture can’t get out,” says Alex Znaiden, director of the Skin Innovation Center at Chesebrough-Ponds. As we age, we lose lipids, and that moisture barrier is weakened. And when the barrier is weakened, moisture added to the skin will have little effect. “It’s like pouring water into a basket,” says Elizabeth Arden’s Susan Arnot Heaney. The new moisturizers, such as Elizabeth Arden’s Daily Moisture Drink, use sophisticated delivery systems to replenish lipids. Next month, Clinique will be launching Moisture On-Call, formulated to increase the skin’s rate of lipid production. The bottom line: an improved barrier function.

In fact, while moisturizers work primarily on the stratum corneum (the skin’s superficial layer), those containing barrier lipids may have more far-reaching effects. Says Alan Meyers, director of product development at Elizabeth Arden, “These products act as a messenger to the [skin’s inner layer],



telling it to synthesize more lipids from the bottom up, creating a better moisture barrier."

### **what's up with AHAs**

Another class of ingredients that can work with moisturizers to improve the skin's appearance is alpha-hydroxy acids, or AHAs, such as glycolic and lactic acids. "AHAs aren't just a craze. They serve a very important purpose in skin care," says Ellen C. Gendler, M.D., director of the Center for Skin Health and Appearance at the New York University Medical Center. That purpose is to act as an exfoliant by dissolving the "intercellular glue" between dead skin cells, thus gently peeling them away and revealing the smoother complexion beneath. The result is more-youthful-looking skin. And AHAs help boost the effectiveness of moisturizers, too. Explains Cristina Carlino, CEO of BioMedic Clinical Care, a company that specializes in therapeutic skin-care products, "You cannot moisturize the skin by putting cream on dead cells. You have to exfoliate to remove them first." Lastly, AHAs can unclog pores, a benefit for those with oily skin.

### **preventive skin care**

But perhaps even more important than ingredients that improve the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles are protectants that can actually help to prevent them. Some of the newest moisturizers contain antioxidants, such as vitamins B and C and beta-carotene, all of which are believed to help prevent the aging process by acting as free-radical scavengers. Free radicals are highly unstable molecules that produce oxidation, the process that causes iron to rust and turns applesauce brown. UV light, cigarettes, pollution and other environmental irritants can promote these free radicals, which, through oxidation, can damage the skin's collagen structure and even cause skin cancer. While there's no scientific proof yet—testing to determine the effects of aging generally takes years to complete—in theory, antioxi-

can give people is to use their sunscreens." Adds Erno Laszlo's Szweda, "Eighty percent to 90 percent of the visible signs of aging are due to photodamage." Which is why he and many dermatologists strongly recommend the daily use of a protectant that screens both UVA and UVB rays and has an SPF of at least 15. And because many daily moisturizers now contain SPFs, says Szweda, "it's easier than ever for a woman to get both the protection and the moisturization she needs every day."

### **the difference between day creams and night creams**

Some multipurpose moisturizers, such as Clarin's Moisturizing Tint, Neutrogena's Moisture SPF 15 Sheer Tint and Lancôme's Imanance Environmental Protection Tinted Creme, contain not only sunscreen and antioxidants but a tint as well, and so can double as a sheer foundation. Obviously, you'd want to wear such a product during the day, and because some dermatologists recommend moisturizing twice a day, this brings up the question of whether you need or want different moisturizers for morning and bedtime.

If you use a basic moisturizer at night and then a different moisturizer with sunscreen in the morning, some dermatologists frankly question the need to do so. "The idea of using different products came from the old days when we tended to use heavier products at night," says Dr. Price. "Now that we have moisturizers that are more cosmetically elegant and offer us better moisturizing ability, it's possible to use one product for both day and night." However, some sunscreen ingredients can be irritating, so if you have sensitive skin, choose a cream that's SPF-free for bedtime.

There's some evidence to indicate that the body may be more receptive to the effects of moisturizers at night, according to Znaiden: "Night is the time when the body naturally repairs itself, so if you're going to give it anything extra, that's the time to do it."

## **Moisturizers now contain vitamins B and C and beta-carotene, which may help prevent the skin's aging process.**

dants may be able to actually keep the skin healthy by intercepting these free radicals.

Just as important to the skin's health as antioxidants are ingredients that can help prevent the damage caused by common pollutants. Chanel's new Total Defense moisturizer uses a unique combination of amino acids, polypeptides, carbohydrates and vitamins to combat these pollutants' effects, and their research promises dramatic results. In studies, sulfur dioxide, a toxic chemical produced by industrial combustion that can interfere with the skin's production of vitamin D, was neutralized up to 31 percent by the Total Defense formulation. "It's the first product of its kind that addresses pollution specifically," explains Jack Mausner, Ph.D., senior vice president of Chanel.

As for other ways moisturizers can help to prevent skin damage, most dermatologists agree that there's no underestimating the need for daily UV protectants. Says Dr. Lupo, "The most important message I

What's more, says Daniel H. Maes, Ph.D., vice president of Estée Lauder research and development, antioxidants may protect the skin better against daily environmental damage when applied at night because they have an extra eight hours to penetrate the stratum corneum.

Whatever you choose, keep in mind that your needs may change as your skin ages, when you travel or from season to season—the reason that Christian Dior's Hydra-Star line offers products designed specifically for different skin types and times of the year. And finally, says Carlino, "don't expect a moisturizer to be a miracle cream. It's really just an adjunct to a healthy lifestyle." In fact, research has shown that topical products may only improve the skin's appearance a skimpy 1 percent to 5 percent. When it comes to your skin, sticking to a healthy diet, getting plenty of exercise and steering clear of sun and cigarettes may be the real fountain of youth.

Vitamins are a key ingredient in moisturizers, like Borghese's new Cura Vitale Time-Defying Moisturizer SPF 8 and Shiseido's Vital-Perfection Moisture Active Lotion.