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medical dermatology update

Questions and Answers

Anti-inflammatories

Q: What cosmeceutical ingredients would you recommend to reduce skin inflammation?

A: Ingredients that have been shown to decrease redness and inflammation in the skin include green tea, quadrinone, aloe vera, allantoin, bisabolol and ascorbic acid. Moreover, green tea has been shown to decrease UVB-induced inflammation, aloe vera works to enhance wound healing, bisabolol increases skin hydration, and ascorbic acid stimulates collagen production and lessens fine lines. In order to determine whether a product that contains an anti-inflammatory additive is beneficial, you must consider the concentration and formulation.

Soothing oatmeal

Q: What is your opinion about the use of oatmeal to decrease skin inflammation?

A: Colloidal oatmeal is commonly used by dermatologists to lessen inflammation in individuals with eczema, poison ivy, insect bites, chicken pox, sunburn, rashes and dry skin. Colloidal oatmeal baths are also a useful adjunct for the management of itching and inflamed skin.

Nonirritating niacinamide

Q: Is niacinamide a good ingredient for those individuals with sensitive skin?

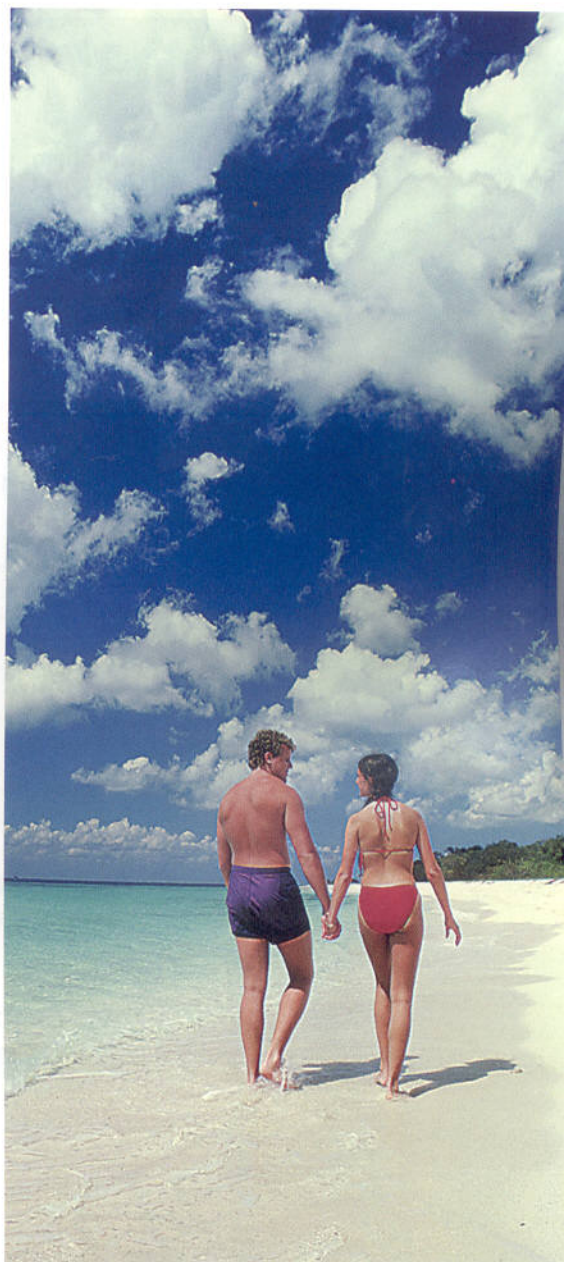
A: Niacinamide is a nonirritating ingredient that improves the skin's barrier function. It has been shown to stimulate collagen production and increase lipids, so it is an ideal ingredient for individuals with sensitive skin who are interested in improving its appearance.

Brief sun exposure does not make the skin sensitive, but an actual sunburn can. For sensitive skin, opt for a nonchemical sunblock.

Banish dry lips

Q: One of my clients has a persistent problem with dry lips. Do you have any recommendations to alleviate her problem?

A: Desquamation of the lips is not unusual in individuals with sensitive skin. The topical use of a low-potency topical steroid (over-the-counter hydrocortisone) and petroleum jelly can help. I would also choose lip gloss over long-lasting lipstick; the latter can exacerbate dryness.



Weekend itch

Q: Do you have any recommendations for itchy skin? One of my clients is 17 years old and complains that her cheeks, chest, upper back and shoulders frequently itch. I know this sound strange, but she says it is more common on the weekends.

A: Does she wear body glitter on the weekends? Body glitter can cause itching in patients with sensitive skin. The use of a mild topical steroid will improve the itching, but tell her that it is best to avoid body glitter if she has sensitive skin.

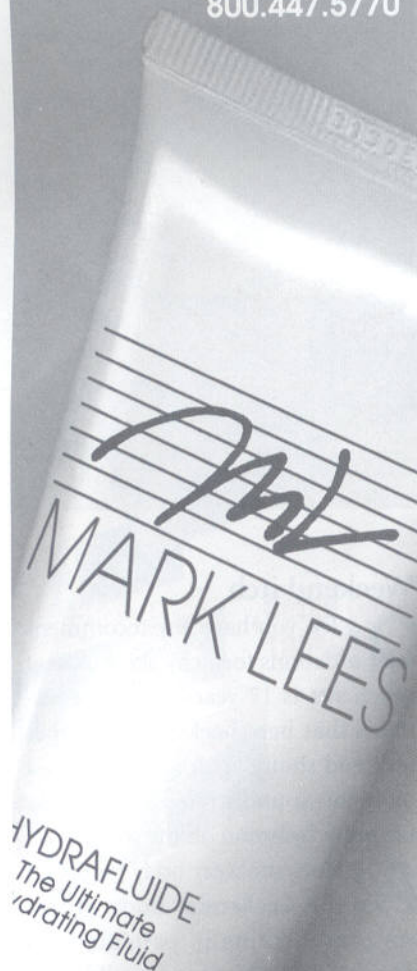
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Sunscreen for sensitive skin

Q: What is your favorite sunscreen for sensitive skin patients?

A: If you have sensitive skin or rosacea you should choose a nonchemical sunblock rather than a chemical sunscreen. Nonchemical sunblocks contain titanium dioxide or transparent zinc oxide and reflect ultraviolet rays. In contrast, chemical sunscreens absorb ultraviolet light and convert it to heat often precipitating irritation and burning in individuals predisposed to sensitive skin.

Sensitive skin tips

Q: What skin care recommendations do you have for those patients with sensitive skin?

A: Individuals with sensitive skin should choose simple products with less than 10 ingredients. Single-use moisturizers that contain no preservatives or fragrances are especially useful. Avoidance of ingredients that tend to irritate the skin such as ethanol, menthol, propylene glycol, sodium lauryl sulfate, chemical sunscreens, sorbic acid, and alpha hydroxy acids, and also abrasive particulates such as mica, polyethylene beads and silica, is also advisable.

Conquer rashes

Q: If my client develops a rash from a product, what should I do?

A: Ideally, you should avoid using the product on her and advise her to seek a dermatologist's evaluation so they may determine the ingredient responsible for her reaction. Fragrances and preservatives are the most likely offending ingredients. If indicated, the dermatologist may perform patch testing to identify the ingredient responsible for her rash. In the future, other products containing this ingredient or cross-reacting ingredients should be avoided.

At-home sensitivity test

Q: Without recommending a visit to the dermatologist, is there a test I can perform or recom-

mend to determine if a client is sensitive to a product?

A: Yes, you can recommend an at-home use test. For five days, the client should apply the product to the flexor aspect of her forearm, twice daily. If redness, stinging, burning or irritation develops, discontinue use of the product.

Sun and sensitivity

Q: Does sun exposure make the skin sensitive?

A: Brief sun exposure does not make the skin sensitive, but an actual sunburn can certainly do the job. Moreover, chronically sun-damaged skin becomes dry and more easily irritated.

Post-peel treatments

Q: How do you treat sensitive skin after microdermabrasion treatment or peels?

A: I recommend cleansing with a nonlipid cleanser. For more superficial peels, I also recommend moisturizing the skin with a preservative-free, fragrance-free, single-use moisturizer. For deeper peels, I recommend a healing ointment. Advise all patients to use a nonchemical sunblock and avoid sun exposure. ■

Debra Price, M.D., graduated from New York University School of Medicine and interned at New York University Medical Center.



She is a diplomate of the American Board of Dermatology and is an assistant professor at University of Miami's department of dermatology and cutaneous surgery. An author of several scientific papers, Dr. Price is an award-winning dermatologist and past president of the Miami Dermatologic Society, in Florida. She has a private practice in Kendall, FL. To reach her, please call (305) 670-1111.