

Health

The Best Anti-Aging Products for People with Rosacea (That Won't Irritate Skin)

Madeleine Burry | April 30, 2018



"Sensitive" is your skin's default if you have rosacea, a skin condition that can cause redness, flushing, bumps, irritation, and enlarged capillary veins, often on the face. That means even everyday lotions and creams can cause a reaction. Anti-aging products—which deliver results through powerful but sometimes harsh ingredients—can be particularly tricky to use if you have rosacea, since they can potentially lead to flare-ups of redness, irritation, and all the other symptoms that define this skin condition.

"People with rosacea should be very cautious when using anti-aging products because these creams may exacerbate the signs and symptoms of rosacea," says Shari Lipner, MD, PhD, a dermatologist at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine. The result, she says, can be dry or flushed skin accompanied by stinging or burning. All in all, probably not the look you're after.

Start with the preventative basics: a moisturizer + SPF

"Always use sunscreen, since it helps prevent rosacea flares," says **William Kwan, MD**, an ethnic skincare expert. This is Dr. Lipner's number-one recommendation to patients with rosacea, too. Opt for a gentle moisturizer (we like Fresh Rose Deep Hydration Face Cream) followed by sunscreen with a high SPF (30 and up). By applying this SPF and moisturizer combo daily, Dr. Lipner says, you'll accomplish several goals: repairing the skin barrier, hydrating skin, and perhaps

most importantly, protecting against UV rays, which both exacerbate rosacea and lead to signs of aging. (Here are some of the very best moisturizers if you have rosacea.)

Inspect ingredients

Stay away from anti-aging products that contain benzoyl peroxide, which can increase inflammation, says Debra Jaliman, MD, board-certified NYC dermatologist, assistant professor of dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and author of *Skin Rules* (\$9; amazon.com). Benzoyl peroxide is most commonly associated with fighting acne, but you'll find it within some anti-aging products as well.

Avoid glycolic acid, too, Dr. Jaliman says. This exfoliating acid is common in antiaging products, but too harsh for rosacea skin. "[Glycolic acid] can burn and cause redness and peeling," she explains.

Bottom line: Any anti-aging product that exfoliates, as well as toners and astringents, should be avoided, says Dr. Lipner. "They may irritate the skin and cause burning and stinging," she says. "They may also cause flushing and redness."

Some antiaging products are a good fit

Fortunately, some products are suitable for even the most sensitive skin. While glycolic acid is a no-go, other acids can be helpful, says Dr. Kwan. He recommends moisturizers with hyaluronic acid, as well as topical antioxidants like vitamin C, niacinamide, and peptides.

Some products do double duty, delivering anti-aging benefits while also reducing the characteristic redness that accompanies rosacea. In this category, Dr. Jaliman recommends Revaleskin Intense Recovery Treatment (\$143; dermstore.com). "[It] has ingredients that will not aggravate the skin of someone with rosacea," she says. "It contains antioxidants such as grape seed extract and green tea, [and] peptides, which firm and tighten skin."

Another go-to anti-aging product she recommends for those with rosacea is Neostrata Bionic Face Cream (\$35; amazon.com). The reason: It's gentle enough

for people with the skin condition, but still effective on aging skin. And, as with Revalskin, the anti-aging cream also has the bonus of reducing redness.

What about retinoids?

Last up in the anti-aging arsenal: Retinoids. This powerhouse increases cell turnover, unclogs pores, and reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. The flipside? Retinoids can make skin dry, red, and irritated. That's problematic for anyone, but especially people with rosacea.

"Retinoids are very helpful for improving the appearance of fine wrinkles, however it is a very delicate balance between treating aging and avoiding flares of rosacea," says Dr. Lipner. But retinoids aren't totally off limits—you'll just need to apply with great caution. Consult a dermatologist before trying a retinoid so you can find the right one for your skin type, says Dr. Lipner. Never, ever use retinoids during a rosacea flare-up, though, and give your skin rest time between applications (rather than applying the topical treatment nightly). Finally, Dr. Lipner says, consider diluting your retinoid with a moisturizer.

Tips for using new products

Use as few products as possible, says Dr. Jaliman. So, opt for one go-to anti-aging solution—not several. Do a patch test with new products, and use them only every other night (or every few nights), she adds.

And don't go it alone. "Use gentle, rich moisturizers in conjunction with your anti-aging topicals to really help soothe the skin," says Dr. Kwan.

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