

# What dermatologists tell their friends

They say beauty is only skin deep. Only?! Skin is our body's largest organ, and when it's clear, hydrated, and radiant, it signals wellness on the inside too. The secrets top M.D.'s share with their favorite people will make you look younger, feel healthier, and change your relationship with your loofah. **BY MEIRAV DEVASH**

## MAGNIFYING MIRRORS ARE LIKE FUN-HOUSE MIRRORS

"Those 20x magnifying makeup mirrors just kill me. All you can see in them are flaws! Nobody should look at you that closely except dermatologists, since that's our job. To the untrained eye, seeing your skin magnified that much encourages picking at otherwise imperceptible blemishes. Plus, it contributes to a poor sense of self because it literally magnifies your imperfections. My mother is in love with them; her excuse is 'I can't see to put my makeup on.' She won't listen to me! I tell everyone I know that if they really can't apply makeup without glasses, find a mirror with magnification of just 5x to 8x that only corrects for nearsightedness." —*Dendy Engelman, M.D., associate dermatologic surgeon at Manhattan Dermatology and Cosmetic Surgery in New York City*

## GOOD SKIN NEEDS A SCHEDULE

"So many friends ask me for product recommendations, and when they do, I remind them that applying formulas at the right time is as important as choosing the right ones. The rule is: Daytime

is for protection and nighttime is about repair. Smooth on an antioxidant serum in the morning to neutralize free radicals, which are harmful molecules created when you're exposed to UV light and pollution. They contribute to the breakdown of collagen and elastin—that's what leads to wrinkles and dark spots. At night, there's no UV to block, so that's a good time to apply moisturizer or serum that contains peptides or retinol; those are proven to stimulate collagen, which'll reduce existing wrinkles and spots and prevent new ones from forming." —*Mary Lupo, M.D., director of Tulane University Resident Cosmetic Clinic and clinical professor of dermatology at Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans*

## SPEND MORE TIME BETWEEN THE SHEETS

"At lunch recently, a friend was saying that she took care of her skin but still felt like it was missing that youthful glow, so I told her to have more sex. Obviously, it's good for your relationship—but it also gives your skin radiance. Sex releases anti-inflammatory hormones and endorphins that help combat stress and aging and boost immunity. All that gives you a healthy, postcoital flush. When women

## Revealed: 3 ways you're driving your doctor crazy

1

### EATING PROCESSED FOODS

Patient studies have linked high-glycemic-index foods (like white breads, French fries, many sugary drinks), which raise your blood sugar, to a higher incidence of acne and a breakdown of collagen in skin. If you're battling pimples, consider also eliminating gluten from your diet for a week to see if it helps; some de-ems believe it plays a part too, though studies haven't proven a connection between gluten and high blood sugar.

2

### TRYING TO EXFOLIATE AWAY DRY BODY SKIN

Dermatologists have had enough of patients scrubbing skin raw, and not moisturizing afterward. Trying to buff away rough skin only strips it further, says Heidi A. Waldorf, M.D., associate professor of dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine of Mount Sinai in New York City. Break the cycle by using a hydrating body wash with glycerin, oils, or ceramides, and follow up with a nourishing moisturizer.

3

### MOISTURIZING WRONG, OR NOT ENOUGH

Lots of people skip body lotion because they don't like that slimy two-to-three-minute window of rubbing it in and waiting for it to absorb. Waldorf has the solution: "The best way to rub in a skin cream is not in a circle—that just pushes it around. Instead, move your hands in a straight line up or down. It soaks into skin faster."

are more sexually active, their estrogen levels go up, which improves skin overall by increasing moisture and promoting collagen production. So I encouraged my friend to start having sex more often than whatever she currently was having. We had a giggle about it, and she seemed happy to follow my advice!" —Debbie Palmer, D.O., cofounder and medical director at Dermatology Associates of New York in Harrison, NY, and Greenwich Hospital in Greenwich, CT

### MADE A CHANGE? YOUR SKIN KNOWS

"A friend called me about an itchy rash on her face. When I saw her red, swollen bumps, I realized it was rosacea. So many things can trigger rosacea, even if you've never had it before: coffee, milk and cheese, chocolate, red wine, spices. I could have put her on antibiotics, but instead I asked her what had changed in her diet—I knew she was a healthy eater and didn't drink alcohol but loved coffee. Turns out, she had recently started taking it with cream. She stopped, and the inflammation disappeared within a week. If you're having a problem, it helps to think about *anything* that's new, even if it seems small. Your doctor might make a connection that can get you relief." —Valerie Goldburt, M.D., cosmetic dermatologist at Advanced Dermatology Center for Laser and Cosmetic Surgery and assistant clinical professor at Mount Sinai Health System in New York City

### YOU CAN'T SCRUB AWAY CHICKEN SKIN

"I live in South Florida, where we wear sleeveless shirts and tanks year round. My best friend constantly had small, red-dish bumps on the back of her arms. That's usually keratosis pilaris (KP), which is an excess of keratin, the main protein that makes up hair, nails, and the skin's outer layer. When keratin clogs the hair follicles, you get KP, which people commonly mistake for rough skin that they think they can exfoliate away with a scrub

### Should you see a doc?

That's never a bad idea with a new mark on your face or body, but here's how a derm friend would walk you through your worry.

#### What on earth is that?

