

# les nouvelles *esthétique* & Spa

AMERICAN EDITION

LNE & Spa—the magazine for skin care and spa professionals October 2007 \$7.50



# skin|hands on

## Ingredients and formulations in well-rounded, anti-aging lines

**T**here are many medical grade skin care products on the market that claim to offer anti-aging benefits, but when selecting cosmetic pharmaceuticals, ergo “cosmeceuticals” for your patients, it is important to consider the formula as a whole, not just the product’s active ingredient(s).

There are several factors to consider in product selection to get the most out of every product as well as to dispense the correct product formulation for each patient.

It is important to understand the advanced formulations and delivery vehicles of the products you use and recommend. Selecting a comprehensive combination of ingredients to treat each of the causes of a skin condition will help ensure long-term results and a healthy, clear complexion for every patient you treat.

### Pay attention to combinations

Many age control products currently on the market contain a form of retinol that claims to minimize fine lines, even out skin tone and texture and increase the firmness of skin. While retinol is a well-known anti-aging ingredient, it is important to note that other ingredients in a formulation can have an impact on its efficacy.

Consider the following when selecting the appropriate anti-aging products for your patients. First and foremost,

understanding a particular skin disease or condition allows you to select the best ingredients to combat its underlying causes. For example, an acne product should contain ingredients that fight more than one of the underlying causes of acne. A beneficial product would be one that contains liquid benzoyl peroxide to deliver oxygen to the follicles—killing

the *Propionibacterium acnes* bacteria—an anti-inflammatory such as chamomile, azelaic acid to work to reduce excess androgen production and lactic acid to break down the bonds among cells and allow for easier exfoliation of dead surface cells.

### Anti-aging, at its best

In terms of aging skin, the most common outward signs we associate with this condition are fine lines, wrinkles and uneven skin texture. Many anti-aging products address these common problems. However, other factors should be targeted by effective anti-aging products.

While retinol—one of the more common anti-aging ingredients—is known for its ability to increase skin elasticity and decrease fine lines, there are other



attributes to look for in anti-aging products. According to *Psychology Today*, “Wrinkles and fine lines are not the only

Vitamin A will help even out skin tone, but if a patient's main concern is hyperpigmentation, a superior product would include tyrosinase inhibitors.

facial cues men use to gauge a woman’s age.” Research suggests that uneven skin tone can make a woman look 12 years older and that skin tone offers clues to a woman’s physiological condition and the way he/she will be perceived, according to *Psychology Today*.

Fortunately, this is an aspect of aging that retinol also helps to correct. Retinol’s strong antioxidant properties help decrease the number of melanosomes and increase cell turnover in skin to treat fading age spots and hyperpigmentation. A product containing topical vitamin A will help even out skin tone to give skin a more youthful appearance, but if a patient’s main concern is hyperpigmentation, a superior product for them would include tyrosinase inhibitors.

*continues*

### Addressing multiple conditions

Along the same vein, retinol's antioxidant properties make it beneficial in treating acne by increasing cell turnover and decreasing keratinization within the follicles. However, if a person with aging skin also needs a product to treat acne, you should recommend one containing some of the acne fighting ingredients mentioned above, as well as naturally-derived essential fatty acids. A few oils with high essential fatty acids include borage seed oil, grape seed oil and wheat germ oil, which actually help balance oily and acneic skin.

### Watch skin type

Another important consideration in product selection is a patient's skin type and skin condition in addition to their skin care habits, as treatment will differ for each acne patient. For instance, dry acne requires hydration along with bacteria and inflammation control, while less aggressive anti-acne agents such as sulfur may be more suitable for acne sufferers with sensitive skin.

Always take into account a product's formulation as a whole. Although patients can purchase benzoyl peroxide and salicylic acid products over the counter, it is the delivery system, base emulsion formula and supporting ingredients that make advanced clinical care products more effective. For example, adding

azelaic acid to salicylic acid topicals provides additional antibacterial action and botanical astringent agents making the formula more effective and well-rounded.

### Avoid excessive stimulation

This concept is also applicable to anti-aging products. While retinol has numerous benefits to reduce the signs of aging, if not paired with the appropriate ingredients, it can be too stimulating and may even worsen a client's skin condition. Because topical vitamin A is inherently unstable, it should be formulated with antioxidants to prevent oxidation, and contained in a stable delivery or encapsulation system. A blend containing vitamins A, C and E is extremely beneficial because C and E stabilize each other while also helping to stabilize the retinol component.

I believe in a progressive, non-aggressive approach to skin care and in advising patients to avoid harsh products or ingredients. However, there are ways to utilize and even increase the benefits of an active ingredient without increasing skin irritation or further problems.

An example is pairing a botanical ingredient with a synthetic version that mimics its characteristics to maximize the key ingredient benefits without over-stimulating the skin and exacerbating patients' skin conditions.

Specifically for anti-aging products, there is a targeted botanical ingredient, *Vigna aconitifolia* seed extract, which has a mechanism of action similar to that of topical vitamin A. Together, they increase cell renewal and collagen synthesis for a smoother, more youthful appearance.

### "Well-rounded" is it!

Looking beyond the list of ingredients on a product label is imperative to most effectively treat aging skin, acne and any skin condition for that matter. There is an art to the formulation of well-rounded clinical grade skin care products, and it is necessary to understand what is behind the science in order to ensure better results to reach your patients' skin care goals. ■

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