



Hyaluronic Acid (HA)

WHY YOU WANT IT HA is made up of sugar molecules; when applied to the skin, it sits on the surface (the molecules are typically too large to be absorbed), where it draws in water, hydrating and protecting the skin barrier, says Jessica Weiser, MD, of New York Dermatology Group. An interesting development: HA can now be manufactured in smaller particles (called hydrolyzed HA) that can penetrate the skin's outer layers, so cells can absorb moisture, says Wilson. The benefit? Hydrated cells function better.

ALIASES Hyaluronan, sodium hyaluronate, and hydrolyzed hyaluronic acid.

BEST PRACTICES Use a cream or lotion containing HA whenever your skin feels parched. You'll see immediate plumping and smoothness.

INSIDER TIP Apply HA products after serum or lotion with an AHA, so the lighter products can penetrate.



Glycerin

WHY YOU WANT IT

Like HA, glycerin is a humectant that draws water to the skin.

It creates a protective barrier that helps skin heal, making it excellent for treating eczema, severe chapping, and irritation.

INSIDER TIP

A product with a high level of glycerin can feel tacky on the skin.



Ceramides and Peptides

Ceramides are lipids naturally found in the skin that can strengthen its barrier function and protect it from irritants like pollution. Peptides are made up of amino acids, the basic building blocks of proteins, and can help boost collagen production, says Sarnoff.

THE ULTIMATE ANTI-AGER

Yes, there is a fountain of youth. It's called sunscreen.

ABOUT 90 percent of the signs of aging are caused by sun exposure, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation. So protecting your skin is a no-brainer.

PHYSICAL SUNSCREENS— zinc oxide, titanium dioxide—are mineral formulas that sit on the surface of the skin, deflecting damaging UV rays, says Wilson. Chemical sunscreens—avobenzone, oxybenzone—penetrate the skin, absorbing and neutralizing the sun's rays.

WHICH SHOULD YOU CHOOSE? While each has its pros and cons, a physical

sunscreen may be better for a few reasons. Its mineral blockers are inherently broad-spectrum, so they protect against both UVA and UVB rays. And because they don't penetrate the skin, mineral sunscreens are less likely to cause irritation. **Bonus:** Today's micronized sunscreens contain particles that reflect more light, giving the formula an elegant, silky texture, says Schueller.

FOR BEST RESULTS, apply an SPF 30 (or higher) every morning, then wait 15 to 20 minutes before sun exposure: Many formulas need time to set, says Wilson. If you're outside all day, be sure to reapply every two to three hours.