

Choosing a Healthy Facial Moisturizer



Why Use Moisturizer?

Moisturizer acts as a protective barrier for your skin, keeping it hydrated and healthy. While there tends to be confusion about the need for moisturizer in the first place, most experts recommend using it on a daily basis.

In addition to maintaining good diet and managing stress, the Mayo Clinic advises using “a moisturizer that fits your skin type and makes your skin look and feel soft” for an effective skin care regimen.

Learn more about going from sallow to dewy, glowing skin.

What's Your Skin Type?

A good skin-care regimen includes daily moisturizing and sun protection to fight free radicals and fend off ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun. This can be perfectly done by some cosmetics, such as sunscreen or face cream with SPF. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends moisturizing after bathing so that your still-damp skin will seal in moisture.

Based on a variety of reasons, including genes and (more manageable) factors like diet, your skin type falls into one of five categories. The most common type in women is combination.

It's important to know your skin type to make sure you're putting the right stuff, such as cosmetics, sunscreens or face creams with SPF on your face. Very dry skin probably won't benefit from a water-based cosmetic product; drier skin will appreciate heavier moisturizers to soak up as much moisture as possible.

Determine your skin type:

- **Dry** (will benefit from a heavier, oil-based moisturizer and cosmetics)
- **Oily** (will benefit from lighter, water-based moisturizers and cosmetics)
- **Mature** (will benefit from oil-based moisturizers to preserve moisture)
- **Sensitive** (will benefit from soothing ingredients, like aloe, that won't be harsh on the skin)
- **Normal/Combination** (will benefit from a lighter, water-based moisturizer)

If you're not sure of your skin type, you can take a simple test. All that's required is a few sections of tissue paper and a couple minutes of your time. After pressing the paper to different areas of your face, you can determine your skin type, based on how much oil the paper has picked up.

Guidelines for Cosmetics

What separates a pricey, prettily packaged product from the \$10 version found on your local drugstore shelf? Sometimes, not much. Don't believe that price tags determine quality. It's the ingredients that matter. A good moisturizer protects you and contains no harmful ingredients.

Ingredients of cosmetics are not strictly defined which makes it tricky to trust which products to use for your face. While cosmetics don't have to be approved to go on the market, there is a silver lining: manufacturers have to list ingredients on the label "to enable consumers to make informed purchasing decisions." That said, reading the ingredients can be as complex as deciphering ancient Greek. Becoming ingredient-savvy can help you understand what's in the bottle or jar of the cosmetics or face cream before you decide to put anything on your face.

Fragrance-Free vs. Unscented

Fragrance-free typically means just that: no fragrances have been added to the product. However, even fragrance-free products are not always fragrance free. A natural ingredient or essential oil, acting as a fragrance, might not be listed as such. Many fragrances are synthetic, and mask toxins that could contribute to skin reactions and allergies.

Unscented products might include a fragrance as well. To mask unpleasant chemical odors, products may include additional synthetic fragrances that could trigger allergic reactions. Many "natural" ingredients may also be lurking on ingredient labels disguised as fragrances.

Active vs. Inactive Ingredients

Active ingredients, put simply, make the product do what's it's intended to do. A great example of this is a sunscreen or a face cream with SPF. A face cream with SPF or a sunscreen that blocks UV rays may include titanium oxide, acting as the principal sunscreen agent. The **inactive ingredients** help out, but they don't fight the sun's rays, in this case. Inactive ingredients assist in creating the final product (whether that's cosmetics, moisturiser, face cream with SPF, sunscreen, pills, liquids or creams).

Non-comedogenic

A product listing this term on the label claims to be non-clogging, or oil-free. Essentially, it means that while the product will break down excess oil, it won't strip your skin of moisture.

Hypoallergenic moisturisers and face creams

Hypoallergenic refers to a product causing less allergic reactions in consumers. Seeing this word on a cosmetic package, however, doesn't guarantee a stamp of safety compared with products not marked as hypoallergenic. Since the guidelines for cosmetics and moisturisers are not rigid, manufacturers

may claim a product to be hypoallergenic but they do not have to provide support for these claims.

So, what can you do? If you've had a reaction from certain ingredients in the past, check the label for these allergic substances—manufacturers *are* required to list all ingredients on the packaging of cosmetics.

Natural vs. Organic moisturisers and face creams

Natural products use ingredients that come from botanical sources (and may or may not use chemicals). Organic products claim to have ingredients that are grown without chemicals, pesticides, or artificial fertilizers. Unfortunately, the loose guidelines make most cosmetics vulnerable to misleading labels, and natural and organic products are not necessarily any better.

Organic cosmetics and face creams are divided into few categories:

- **100 percent organic:** these products must use **organically-produced** ingredients (not counting water and salt).
- **Organic:** products marked “organic” contain at least **95 percent organic** ingredients (not counting water and salt); as for the rest of the ingredients, they must be from approved, non-agricultural substances, or from non-organically produced agricultural products.
- **Made with organic ingredients:** contains at least **70 percent organic** ingredients; these cosmetics are allowed to list “up to three of the organic ingredients or ‘food’ groups on the principal display panel.”
- **Less than 70 percent organic ingredients: these cosmetics** cannot use the word “organic” anywhere on the main product package (*organically produced* ingredients can be listed).

Broad-Spectrum products and cosmetics

This means that the product blocks both UVB and UVA rays from the sun. While not all moisturizers contain sunscreen, many products now offer this two-in-one blend – a face cream with SPF. If you don't use a moisturizer that fights the sun's rays, apply your moisturizer first then follow up with sunscreen.

Parabens

Parabens are preservatives that give cosmetics a longer shelf life. On the label, you may see these commonly used parabens in cosmetics: methylparaben, propylparaben, and butylparaben, all deemed safe for use in cosmetic products at levels up to 25 percent.

Used in a variety of beauty and skin care products and cosmetics, parabens have been studied for their potential health risks, based on concerns that they mimic estrogen, which in turn could lead to cancer. However, they can still be included in products marked as organic.

Currently, the Food and Drugs Association maintains that parabens do not pose a serious health risk to require their removal from cosmetic products. Based on studies, the FDA claims, “Although

parabens can act similarly to estrogen, they have been shown to have much less estrogenic activity than the body's naturally occurring estrogen." Parabens are considered safe at low levels, ranging from **0.01 to 0.3** percent in cosmetics.

Phthalates

Phthalates are found among a wide variety of products—from fragrances, sunscreens, face creams with SPF, lotions, and deodorants to toys and food packaging—and have raised concern about potential health risks, including impaired fertility. Due to increasing public anxiety, progress was made to push for testing and federal regulation. A 2008 study by the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics showed that a portion of the cosmetics industry has lowered its use of phthalates in products. This widely used and widely researched chemical has been studied mainly in rodents, and in limited volunteer studies in humans. According to the American Chemistry Council, findings suggest that cancer-causing concerns in phthalates are more unique to rodents than to humans. Reports by the U.S. National Toxicology Program on six of the seven phthalates that it reviewed found the risk to human reproductive and developmental health to be “minimal.”

#cosmetics #moisturiser #sunscreens #face cream with SPF

<https://www.healthline.com/health/cosmetic-safety/healthy-facial-moisturizers>