

BEAUTY BY THE NUMBERS

IS YOUR REGIMEN UP-TO-SNUFF FOR ALL THE WEAR-AND-TEAR YOU'VE PUT YOUR SKIN THROUGH OVER THE YEARS?

Crow's feet. Sun spots. Bags under the eyes. Acne? What did you do wrong to deserve pimples, blotches and wrinkles at this age? The quest for healthy skin may not be over, but it shouldn't be a mystery, either. Dermatologist and antiaging expert Leslie Baumann, MD, tells us how to protect our best asset at every age.



SUN-DOWN

By now you should know you must at least cleanse your skin. There are ways to do this kindly and effectively. If you don't have any specific skin conditions, Baumann recommends using any liquid cleanser and always avoiding bar soaps. "There is never a time for a bar soap, as these soaps tend to be harsher on the skin, stripping away essential fats." In addition, bacteria sit on wet bars and

acne can result. "I have patients who can't understand why their razor rash won't go away, but it is often because they are using bar soap."

Beyond establishing a nourishing cleansing ritual, your 20s should be about protecting your skin from the sun. Sun exposure causes almost all of our aging skin concerns—uneven tone, brown spots, wrinkles, sagging skin and skin cancer.

20s

To keep the fresh skin you have now, wear a minimum of SPF 15 sunscreen at all times, with a daily moisturizer. Baumann finds that serums are most popular for men and women, especially those with oily skin, and crèmes are best for dry skin.

If you have no skin sensitivities, try Purpose Dual Treatment moisturizer with SPF 15. For sensitive skin types, try the

Vanicream line, which is free of common chemical irritants, or VMV Hypoallergenic, which is formulated without the 25 most common allergens. Want a one-step sunblock process? You're in luck. Freeze 24-7 offers Ice Shield SPF 15, a cleanser/SPF that uses a silicon coating technology with positive and negative charges to deposit a sunscreen to the top layer of the skin, says Baumann.



30s

A+ WITH RETINOIDS

Now is the time to build on what you know. You should still cleanse and protect against the sun, but adding a retinol (a vitamin A derivative) product will help improve your skin's tone and minimize fine lines and wrinkles by stimulating the production of collagen, which is broken down by the sun and naturally decreases with age.

Also, avoid foam-based cleansers. Like bar soaps, they strip essential fats from the skin, which are necessary to keep a hydrated, healthy skin texture. "Here's what I tell my clients: 'Use a sunscreen every morning, a retinol product every night, avoid the sun and

don't smoke.' Those are the best things you can do for your skin at this age," says Baumann.

Retinol products come in different strengths, so start with over-the-counter versions first, such as RoC's Retinol Correction night crème or L'Oréal Men's Expert Vita Anti-Wrinkle and Firming Moisturizer with Pro-Retinol (with or without SPF) for about four weeks. "Prescription-strength retinols are better, but many people can't tolerate them immediately," says Baumann. Once your skin is used to the retinol product (initial use can cause redness and dryness), ask your dermatologist about a prescription-strength product like Atralin (tretinoin).

HERE'S YOUR CHEAT SHEET TO A HEALTHIER LOOK THROUGH THE AGES.

20s Cleanser + sunscreen

30s Cleanser + sunscreen + retinol product

40s Cleanser + sunscreen + antioxidant + retinol

WATER WONDERS?

Contrary to popular belief, drinking lots of water will not improve the skin's hydration, says Baumann. It flushes out toxins and keeps skin and organs lubricated, yes. But the fats in your skin are far more important. "Vegans and those on very low-fat diets tend to have drier skin." Baumann recommends an adequate intake of omega-3-rich foods and supplements if necessary, which will also help cut down skin inflammation from acne, rosacea and allergic reactions.

40s

POKER FACE

In your 40s, you have to get serious about your skin care. Continue with your previous regimen, but add an antioxidant moisturizer for optimal results. Once you hit your late 30s and early 40s, Baumann explains, you start to lose collagen, elastin (helps the skin bounce back) and hyaluronic acid (gives skin that baby-like plump look) because your fibroblasts quit making them. The sun not only shuts off production of these compounds—it breaks down collagen and activates free radicals. Antioxidants are essential to reducing the free radicals.

In the morning cleanse, moisturize with antioxidants and apply sunscreen. At night, cleanse, apply retinol, then moisturize. If your skin is not accustomed to the retinol, apply the moisturizer first. For the moisturizer, CoQ10 and vitamin C products are good choices. "The more antioxidants, the better," says Baumann, who also recommends taking 500 mg of vitamin C every day. And don't stop there. Tap into antioxidant-rich food sources like green tea, fruits like blueberry, acai and pomegranate, red wine, and dark chocolate.



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Dr. Baumann is the Director of Cosmetic Dermatology at University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. A researcher and professor, she is also the author of *The Skin Type Solution*, which identifies 16 skin types and how to treat them, and the medical textbook *Cosmetic Dermatology: Principles and Practice*.