

# SKIN TRUTHS

What exactly are antioxidants? Do I need sunscreen every day? And what's *really* the best wrinkle cream? Dermatologists answer your top anti-aging questions. **By Rory Evans**



**A simple way to prevent undereye puffiness: Go to bed earlier.**

**D**oris Day, star of song and screen, sang “*Que Sera, Sera*” about her future, asking, “Will I be pretty? Will I be rich?” But really, wasn’t she the tiniest bit curious about signs of premature aging, or how to ward off a freckle-mottled chest?

Maybe she was just resigned to “Whatever will be, will be.” But according to an entirely different

Doris Day, a dermatologist in New York City, whatever will be doesn’t have to be. When you have all the answers to the most common, nagging anti-aging questions, you can change your fate—and keep your skin looking younger longer. Some of the top dermatologists revealed the anti-aging questions they hear from patients time and time again—and the indubitable, inevitable answers.



**Your neck benefits from skin creams, too.**

### WHAT ARE THE BEST ANTI-AGING ANTIOXIDANTS?

There are now enough antioxidant skin serums, supplements, and energy drinks to make your head spin. Their purpose: to protect the cells from free-radical damage caused by environmental factors such as UV rays, smog, and smoking. By doing this, antioxidants minimize wrinkles and generally improve the skin.

Some of the most effective are CoffeeBerry, phloretin with vitamin C and ferulic acid, and idebenone, says David H. McDaniel, assistant professor of clinical dermatology and plastic surgery at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, who specializes in antioxidants. He recommends any of these reliable creams: RevaléSkin Night Cream (with CoffeeBerry), SkinCeuticals Phloretin CF (“Phloretin is the ‘new kid on the block,’ but the vitamin C and ferulic acid are also important antioxidants in this product”), or PreVage MD (with idebenone). “I really like the idea of using two different ones, either on alternating nights or one in the morning and one in the evening,” he says. (He prefers SkinCeuticals in the morning and RevaléSkin in the evening.) “The anti-

## The easiest way to fade brown spots is to smear on a hydroquinone cream.

oxidant actions are somewhat different, so getting some of both makes sense.”

### WHAT ABOUT OVER-THE-COUNTER RETINOL VERSUS PRESCRIPTION?

Alas, this is not quite as simple as an O’Doul’s versus Amstel taste test. “It used to be that over-the-counter retinol products had good active ingredients, but some formulations were poorly done or the concentration was low. Formulations in general, though, have improved dramatically in the past few years,” says McDaniel. “Many skin-care companies are really starting to make some great ones.” The creams are now more stable, he says, meaning that they maintain their potency, and they blend better with the active ingredients.

The main difference is intensity. Prescriptions such as Renova, Retin-A, and Tazorac are generally stronger than OTC creams. So, deciding which to use

comes down to basic logic. “OTC retinol products are good for all skin types and will reduce fine lines and help skin tone,” says Jeannette Graf, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City. “Retinol penetrates the skin very well and is an effective anti-aging treatment.”

As for the strong stuff? “Prescription retinoids are for people with more severe photodamage who want greater efficacy”—in other words, people with deep lines and more sun spots. Because they’re stronger, the prescriptions have a higher risk of irritation. For that reason, Leslie Baumann, director of the University of Miami Cosmetic Medicine and Research Institute, often starts her patients on OTC versions and then bumps them up to a prescription. For the former, she likes Neutrogena Healthy Skin, RoC Retinol Correxion Deep Wrinkle Serum, Philosophy Help Me, and Topix Replenix Smoothing Serum.

## AT WHAT AGE DO I NEED TO START USING ANTI-AGING PRODUCTS?

You are already, presumably, older than three months. “It might sound facetious, but it really is the point at which people should start using sunscreen, and that’s the best anti-aging product out there,” says Jeffrey Dover, associate professor of dermatology at Yale School of Medicine and author of *The Youth Equation* (Wiley). “If you use sun protection every day of your life, it will help prevent sun-induced aging, and you won’t need many other anti-aging procedures.”

Granted, very few people have had such stellar habits straight out of the cradle, especially anyone who has ever owned a bikini or used the words “lay out.” So the goal is to prevent more damage and reverse any that exists. “Maybe you made errors in your teen years; maybe you went to a tanning

screen, I call it daylight screen,” she adds, which also drives home the point that you need it even on cloudy days, since clouds don’t filter age-accelerating UVA rays. (When the television meteorologist announces the day’s UV index, he’s referring mostly to the sunburning UVB rays.)

On days spent mostly indoors, just rub in that SPF moisturizer each morning. If you’re at the beach or playing tennis, reapply a broad-spectrum sunscreen (preferably a sports formula) at least every two hours, and more often as you work up a sweat. Even low- or no-impact outdoor endeavors—an al fresco lunch or afternoon shopping along Abbot-Kinney—call for reapplication.

And what do the driver’s seat and a ski slope have in common? They are both unlikely—but unrelenting—sunny spots. “You can get a significant amount of aging UVA light exposure through car windows, so long-distance com-

“It’s better to maintain your weight than it is to lose and gain.”

salon; so what? It’s not too late to start taking care of your skin in your 20s,” says Heidi Waldorf, director of cosmetic and laser dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City. Wear a daily moisturizer with an SPF of at least 15, and make sure it’s broad-spectrum, meaning it protects against burning UVB light and the far more predominant (90 percent of the sun’s rays) UVA, which causes signs of aging and contributes to skin cancer. (Neutrogena Ageless Restoratives Skin Renewal Moisture SPF 30 is one.) The other half of the equation, says Waldorf: a retinoid cream.

## DO I NEED SUNSCREEN EVERY DAY, EVEN WHEN IT’S CLOUDY?

Does a snowman like snow? That is, in a word, yes. “Whenever you don’t need a flashlight, you need sunscreen,” says Doris Day, clinical assistant professor of dermatology at New York University School of Medicine. “Instead of sun-

muters need to be wary”—and vigilant about applying sunscreen, says Howard Fein, director of dermatologic surgery at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. And the higher you go in altitude, the more damaging the sun’s rays. “A ski slope is like one big sun reflector,” says Graf.

## WHAT CAN I DO NOW SO I WON’T NEED SURGERY LATER?

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of...Steri-Strips, sutures, and cold compresses. And perhaps the most surprising way to avoid going under the knife involves pounds, quite literally: Yo-yo dieting leads to loose, sagging skin. “I tell patients it’s better to maintain your weight—even if it’s ten pounds over—than it is to lose and gain and lose and gain,” says Patricia Wexler, associate clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine.

Beyond that, the best ways to safeguard your skin are to wear sunscreen

# FILLING STATION

Trying to understand which injections go where (and why) is enough to furrow the brow. Plastic surgeons Claudio DeLorenzi and Julius Few explain.

## 1 Hyaluronic acid (Restylane, Juvéderm, and Perlane)

This filler treats a variety of areas because it’s available in different consistencies. Small hyaluronic acid (HA) particles are used to smooth skin around the eyes, while larger particles fill deep laugh lines and sunken regions like the cheeks. Hyaluronic acid is also the best option for lip filling. “The lips are extremely sensitive, so they can develop bumps,” says Few, clinical associate for the division of plastic surgery at the University of Chicago—and because hyaluronic acid is malleable, it’s easier to create a smooth, even surface with it. Plus, HA is the most forgiving of the fillers. “If the patient doesn’t care for the results, they can be reversed completely within 24 hours,” says Few. (Other fillers cannot easily be removed and, depending on the patient’s skin type and the area that is being treated, can last anywhere from 6 to 18 months).

## 2 Collagen (Zyderm, Cosmoderm, Zyplast, and Cosmoplast)

Unlike hyaluronic acid, collagen is better suited for leveling wrinkles and fine lines. While all fillers cause temporary redness, tenderness, and bruising around the injection site, bruising is less severe with collagen because it slows bleeding. And because collagen limits the risk of excessive bruising in general, it cuts down on recovery time.

## 3 Calcium hydroxylapatite (Radiesse)

This is the longest-lasting filler, and its longevity has its benefits and risks. “I avoid using this filler for minor cosmetic purposes,” says DeLorenzi, a plastic surgeon in Ontario. “Calcium hydroxylapatite is good for treating scars or serious conditions like facial wasting, but short-lived fillers such as HA and collagen are best for correcting signs of aging. It’s best to start small and sparingly. You don’t want to be stuck with results that you don’t like.”

—LIANA SCHAFFNER

(yep, again), not to smoke (since it dulls skin tone and breaks down elastic tissue), and not to pick pimples, which creates pockiness, scarring, and areas of increased sun sensitivity—all of which compromise your complexion over time. In your 30s, when skin starts looking a little dull, again, a prescription retinoid or laser treatments can fight wrinkles and increase skin firmness, thereby deferring a need for surgery.

Of course, Botox is also a very popular option: “You can consider Botox for the top third of your face,” Wexler says, “and fillers for the bottom two thirds.” Botox actually works as a preventive measure because it limits the face’s movement and curtails further damage.

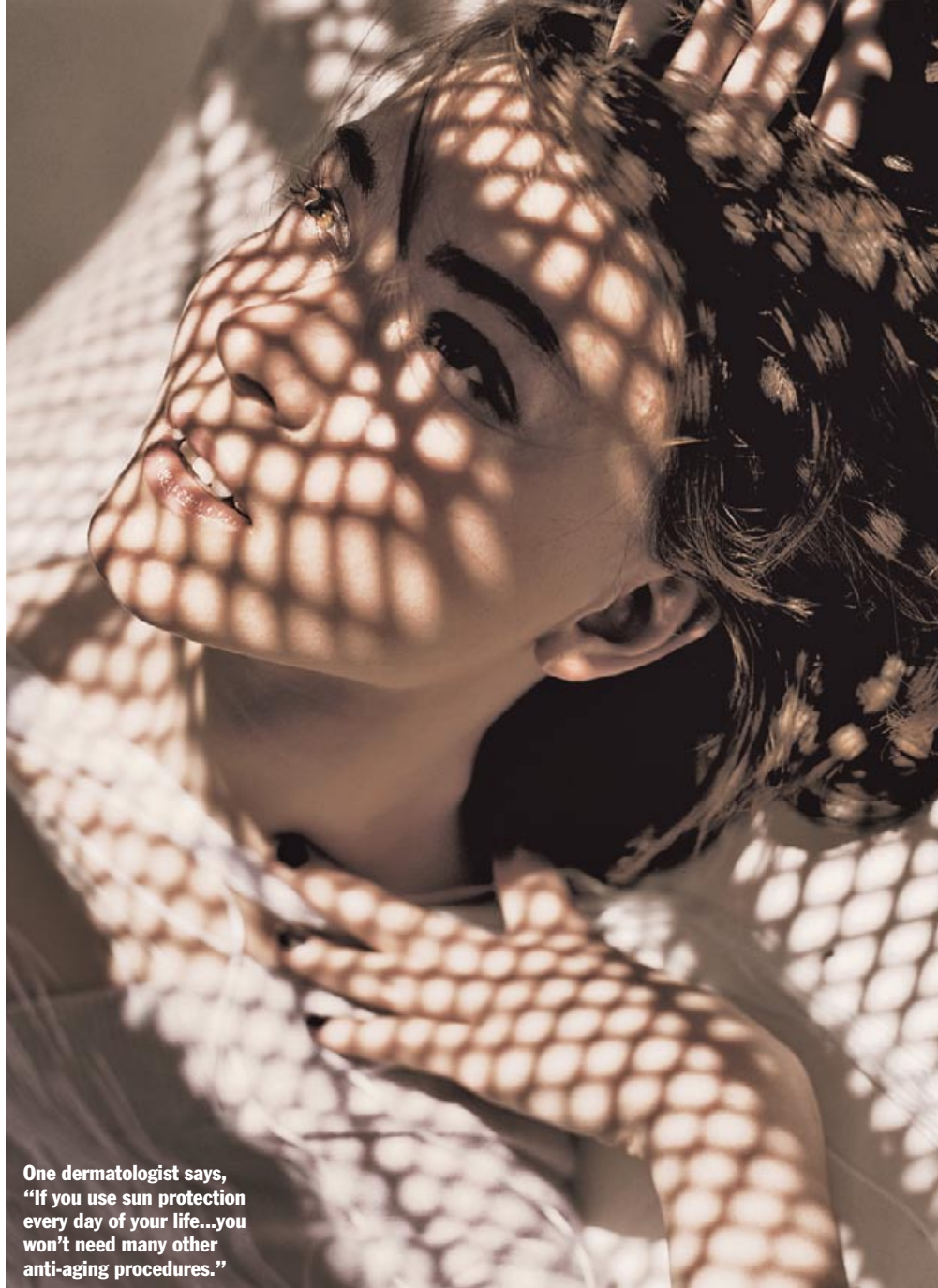
### WHAT ABOUT MY NECK—WHAT’S THE BEST TREATMENT?

Perhaps you’ve looked at your neck in the mirror and wondered when Yo-Yo Ma might show up and start plucking out some Rachmaninoff. As natural as taut cords and horizontal lines are, especially in your 40s, they’re also largely deferrable, with the same anti-aging treatments you use for your face. A more aggressive treatment is Botox, Waldorf explains, which relaxes the muscle that runs up the neck and under the chin and, by limiting its movement, “reduces the appearance of those vertical bands and horizontal wrinkles.”

To tighten and smooth sagginess, another frequent gripe about the area, dermatologists often recommend a Thermage treatment, which uses radio frequency to heat the skin. The caveat is that its exact results are unpredictable: While your skin will certainly show *some* improvement, there is a range of responses. The treatment costs about \$2,500, with results lasting up to two years.

### HOW DO I GET RID OF BROWN SPOTS ON MY FACE AND CHEST?

The proliferation of freckles and sun spots didn’t appear overnight. Nor will they go away that quickly. The easiest, least expensive route is to smear on a cream or gel with hydroquinone, which is the only ingredient approved by the FDA



One dermatologist says, “If you use sun protection every day of your life...you won’t need many other anti-aging procedures.”

## GRAY ANATOMY

*The real reason hair changes color as we age.*

**I**t may be the most chilling beauty harbinger—that first, errant gray hair. See it, and you imagine waking up tomorrow under a snowcap like Phil Donahue’s. And your next logical thought is, How can I halt this process?

In reality, there’s no natural way to stop your hair from graying. Stress, for instance, isn’t the Paula Deen—if it’s rumored to be; nor has smoking been conclusively proven to affect hair color. Instead, the cause is simple, but biology that currently can’t be fought: the gradual loss of one little enzyme. Hair cells produce tiny amounts of color-erasing

hydrogen peroxide that are usually offset by the enzyme, according to a recent—and very illuminating—study published in the *Journal of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology*.

It turns out that as the body ages, you produce less of the enzyme, which allows grayness to escalate. If researchers can figure out a way to get antioxidants to penetrate deep enough into the hair to defuse the hydrogen peroxide, they may well have a cure for gray hair. In the meantime, if you don’t like your silver streaks, they’re easily covered with hair color—at a salon or at home.



A prescription retinoid or laser treatments can fight wrinkles and increase skin firmness.

for skin lightening. (We like Murad Age Spot and Pigment Lightening Gel and Ambi Skincare Fade Cream for Normal Skin.) For a little more oomph, there's the prescription cream Tri-Luma, which is a combination of a soothing steroid, smoothing tretinoin, and 4 percent hydroquinone. It can take four weeks to see initial signs of improvement, though, and up to eight months for vastly noticeable differences. "It can work," Dover allows, "but it can take a *looong* time." An Intense Pulsed Light laser also helps but costs about \$200 a session. This, Graf points out, is still gradual: "We can treat the chest area in about five office visits, depending on the patient's response, usually about a month apart," she says, with results that significantly eradicate the large spots and discoloration.

### HOW CAN I GET RID OF BAGS OR DARK CIRCLES UNDER MY EYES?

It might be easier than you think. "Does the puffiness get worse when you drink too much and stay up late?" asks Dover.

In that case, the best, decidedly non-surgical solution is to—brace yourself—skip a night of drinking and get to bed early. You can also try cutting back on salt in your diet and getting a little exercise. "An ice pack in the morning works, too," says Graf, because the cold will significantly diminish the swelling.

Sometimes, though, depuffing requires more than a Ziploc full of ice cubes. Persistent undereye bags can be treated with a product containing caffeine, says Fein, who likes Garnier Nutritioniste Skin Renew Anti-Puff Eye Roller. "The caffeine is thought to reduce puffiness and help with eyelid swelling," he says. Of course, sometimes the problem is genetic. Occasionally, Waldorf says, patients opt to have filler injected into the tear trough (from the upper nose to the eye), which makes the pad appear less prominent. In other cases, patients choose surgical removal of the fat—a more invasive and expensive (and permanent) procedure.

The other most common undereye complaint is dark circles. Mediterranean women are especially prone to discolor-

## BIG APPLE

Just like the new trendy word that suddenly appears on every menu—"crudo"! "ramps"!—a beauty ingredient can suddenly become a fad. The latest is apple stem cells, specifically those from the Swiss Uttwiler Spätlauber apple, which is known for staying fresh longer than other apples. In products including 3Lab Super "h" Serum, Clark's Botanicals Cellular Lifting Serum, and EmerginC Protocell cream, the cells slow down skin aging, according to the companies. Experts are intrigued but cautious. "We still have a lot more to learn," says David McDaniel. Currently, the only study on the cells was conducted by Mibelle Biochemistry, the ingredient manufacturer for these companies. The study results showed that the apple cells can protect the longevity and activity of existing skin cells—and possibly stimulate new stem cells, all of which would make skin look younger. McDaniel believes that while the small company study was well-conducted, it is not enough: "More independent clinical research is needed." —KAYLEIGH DONAHUE

ation that “looks almost like a brownish smudge,” says Neil Sadick, clinical professor of dermatology at Weill-Cornell School of Medicine in New York City. When excess melanin is the cause, “they can be treated with a high-potency antioxidant or a bleaching agent like hydroquinone.” Fein points out that one product with an antioxidant, RevaléSkin Replenishing Eye Therapy, is yellow-green, which (dust off those Art Studio II color wheels) soaks into the dark circles and counteracts the brownish tint of the skin.

Purple circles, meanwhile, are caused by dilated blood vessels and deposits of a purple pigment in blood. Baumann says that they’re especially common in smokers and, oddly, people who live close to the equator. They’re also notoriously hard to treat with ordinary creams. “Nothing works really well,” Baumann says. “Biopelle has a vitamin K oxide, which is marketed for bruising, and that may work. Using vitamin K with a retinol product may work,

too.” One such product is Quintessence Clarifying Under Eye Serum Capsules. (Note that vitamin K is sometimes listed on product labels as phytonadione.)

The speediest fix for either circles or puffiness is a laser treatment. For brownish spots, Waldorf recommends the Fraxel laser (the number of sessions depends on the patient; they’re about \$1,600 each). The purplish-red variety are better “treated with a Vbeam laser,” she says. Getting rid of them would require about two or three visits, at around \$300 per session.

### IS BOTOX REALLY SAFE?

Baumann, who hears this question often, blames inexperienced practitioners. As for the Botox “girls’ night ouch” trend, she insists that “qualified doctors don’t go to parties with syringes.” People may worry that the injection will lead to an infection of botulism; that it will

leak and paralyze the wrong part of their face; that they’ll get splitting headaches; or that it will make their brows or lids droop over their eyes like Dumb Donald’s knit cap on *Fat Albert*.

In fact, some of these fears are not entirely unfounded—1 to 3 percent of patients can experience ptosis, that droopy eyelid effect, for up to four months (although it’s treatable with another drug, Alcon). In May, the FDA issued an “ongoing safety review” of Botox, meaning they are continuing to look into whether the drug requires additional regulations but have not established a causal relationship between the drug and safety issues such as botulism poisoning and shortness of breath. Ultimately, most dermatologists consider the injectable to be very safe if it’s administered by a dermatologist or plastic surgeon who is experienced in using Botox cosmetically. ♦

“Qualified doctors don’t go to parties with syringes” of Botox.

## Younger Cover

Concealers that also promise to treat dark circles, spots, or fine lines could become our new friends with benefits. “They could fight aging if there is a high enough concentration of the right active ingredients,” says dermatologist Heather Woolery-Lloyd. She says Cover FX Camouflage Concealer has the proper dose of retinol: not so much that it will cause irritation, but enough to “see improvement on fine lines and wrinkles over three to four months.” (Be sure to wear a product with SPF over it, as retinol may cause sun sensitivity.) Black Opal Fade & Conceal contains Sepi-White, an ingredient that can decrease dark spots; it could “lighten spots and dark circles over time,” Woolery-Lloyd says. And the collagen in It Cosmetics Bye Bye Under Eye Waterproof Concealer hydrates the eye area to make the skin look smoother, she says, “but any good moisturizer would do that.” Overall, says Woolery-Lloyd, “the main goal of these products is to cover imperfections, so you should still use your regular skincare products.”

—KAYLEIGH DONAHUE

## FIVE MYTHS DEBUNKED

Dermatologists report that patients often show up at their offices spouting outdated—or outlandish—myths and misconceptions. Among the doctors’ favorite false beliefs:

1 “The tanning salon I go to says its tan is safe—even safer than the sun.”

“My patients tell me that because the machines filter out the burning rays, it’s safe,” Graf says. “It’s not. The UVA rays age your skin, and they’ve also been shown to cause skin cancer.”

2 “I drink tons of water because I don’t want to get wrinkles.”

“Drinking water is certainly a good habit,” Baumann says, “but there’s no evidence that it somehow penetrates and moisturizes your skin.”

3 “I swear by Preparation H to depuff my eyes—I heard movie stars use it.”

“I still hear this fairly often,” says McDaniel. “And I am not aware of any really good clinical studies to document the efficacy or lack thereof.” Preparation H was, how-

ever, reformulated for the U.S. several years ago and no longer includes Bio-Dyne, a yeast culture that putatively reduces puffiness (the ointment sold in Canada still contains this ingredient). Perhaps more to the point: Why not try an eye cream or gel rather than something intended for hemorrhoids? We like Patricia Wexler M.D. DePuff Eye Gel and Origins No Puffery.

4 “I can’t have sun damage, because I never lie out in the sun.”

So many people think that sun damage can only happen with intentional sunbathing, when in fact, says Dover, “you’re vulnerable anytime you’re outdoors”—gardening, walking, playing tennis, or even if you’re doing something as virtuous as hammering nails for Habitat for Humanity.

5 “I don’t need SPF. My spray tan gives me sun protection.”

A spray tan gives you the only kind of healthy glow there is. But don’t be fooled into skipping sunscreen. Spray tanning offers “zero sun protection,” Graf says.