

MYTH #1 ALBUMIN - The chief ingredient in artificial face lifts. It is being touted as a wrinkle treatment.

. . . The last time a serious case concerning consumer claims came up was in the 1960's. Both of these products were temporary wrinkle removers. The formulas contained a bovine serum albumin in that, when dried, formed a film over wrinkles thus making wrinkles less obvious. (Brumberg)

MYTH #2 BIOTIN - (Vitamin H) An exotic ingredient promoted as being necessary and beneficial for skin and hair care.

A deficiency of this vitamin has been associated with greasy scalps and baldness in rats and other experimental animals. Fur-bearing animals, however, have a very different hair growth from Human Beings. Biotin deficiency in man is extremely rare. Biotin is considered a worthless additive in cosmetic products. (Chase)

MYTH #3 COLLAGEN - Some companies imply that collagen can support the skin's own collagen network Others claim it can be absorbed to moisturize skin.

The collagen in creams and lotions acts like any protein ingredient in that it merely provides a coating on the skin's surface. (Chase) The collagen molecule cannot penetrate your skin because it is much too large to be absorbed by the epidermis. (Brumberg) . . . Collagen, elastin, or other proteins and amino acids cannot get into the skin through topical application. The molecules of these substances are simply too large to penetrate your skin. (Novick) Cosmetics manufacturers have heralded it as a new wonder ingredient, but according to medical experts, it cannot effect the skin's own collagen when applied topically. (Winter)

MYTH #4 ELASTIN - Another ingredient promoted as being beneficial for skin and hair care.

Elastin is included in some skin care products, but nowhere near as much as collagen. It too, cannot be absorbed by the epidermis. (Brumberg) In a cosmetic product, they cannot restore tone to skin. When used in such products as moisturizers, they act like all other commercial proteins-- by forming a film that holds moisture. (Chase)

MYTH #5 GLYCERIN - Promoted as being a beneficial humectant.

This is a clear, syrupy liquid made by chemically combining water and fat. The wafer splits the fat into smaller components-- glycerol and fatty acids. It improves the spreading qualities of creams and lotions and prevents them from losing water through evaporation. Glycerin, however, has a tendency to draw water out of the skin and so can make dry skin dryer. (Chase) A solvent, humectant and emollient in many cosmetics, it absorbs moisture from the air and; therefore, helps keep moisture in creams and other products, even if the consumer leaves the cap off the container. (Winter) SEE HUMECTANTS

MYTH #6 HUMAN PLACENTAL EXTRACT - Promoted for rejuvenating and nourishing aging skin.

Placental extracts are another big hype. In moisturizers, these ingredients allegedly supplement the vitamin and hormone content The manufacturers of these products take advantage of the belief that since the placenta nourishes the developing embryo, an extract of it can nourish and rejuvenate aging skin. Placental extracts can do no such thing. (Novick) The value of a cosmetic depends on its active ingredients and with cosmetics containing 'placental extract it is impossible to tell what you are getting. (Chase) Temporary means temporary, but it's still nice, every now and then, to be able to get a smoother look. Some ingredients include sodium silicate, bovine serum albumin and human placental protein. (Brumberg)

MYTH #7 HUMECTANTS - Ingredients which draw moisture to and aid in moisturizing skin.

Most moisturizers contain humectants that act as water attractors... They actually pull moisture out of your skin. (Valmy) The problem with humectants, including propylene glycol and glycerin is that; although they are most effective when you are in areas with high humidity, if you are going to be in an extremely low humidity atmosphere, such as in an airplane or even a dry room, they can actually take moisture from your skin. Here's why: Humectants are on the search for moisture that can be absorbed from the environment. If the environment is so drying that there is no moisture to be had, they till get it from the next best source - your skin. When this happens, the ingredient, which is supposed to help your skin retain moisture, instead does the opposite. (Brumberg) A substance used to preserve the moisture content of materials, especially in hand creams and lotions. (Winter) SEE GLYCERIN, PROPYLENE GLYCOL

MYTH #8 HYPOALLERGENIC - A product to which you are not allergic.

Hypoallergenic means "less than" and the word hypoallergenic tells the consumer that the manufacturer believes the product has fewer allergens than other products. There are no federal regulations defining allergens, nor are there any guidelines. So "hypoallergenic" has little meaning. (Brumberg)

MYTH #9 LANOLIN - A beneficial moisturizer.

Advertisers have found that the words "contain Lanolin" help to sell a product and have promoted it as being able to "penetrate the skin better than other oils," although there is little scientific proof of this. Lanolin has been found to be a common skin sensitizer causing allergic contact skin rashes. (Winter)

MYTH #10 LIPOSOMES - Ultimate anti-aging agent

Liposomes are one of the newest entries in the Fountain-of-Youth arena. According to one recent theory, cellular aging involves the edification of skin cell membranes. Liposomes, which are tiny bags of fat and thymus gland extract suspended in a gel, are supposed to merge with your aging skin cells, revive them and add moisture to them. Current scientific understanding does not support the rigidification theory. The cell membranes of young and old persons are alike. As a result, it is likely that liposome-containing moisturizers represent nothing more than another expensive allure. (Novick)

MYTH #11 MINERAL OIL - A beneficial moisturizer.

Has tendency to dissolve the skin's own natural oil and thereby increase dehydration. Mineral oils have been found to be probably the single greatest cause of breakouts in women who use a new product. (Chase)

MYTH #12 NATURAL COSMETICS - No Artificial ingredients Pure or from nature.

In cosmetic terminology, the term 'natural' usually means anything the manufacturer wishes. There are no legal boundaries for the term. As a whole, natural cosmetics are purely an advertising gimmick (Chase)

There are no guidelines surrounding what can or cannot be inside a "natural" product. Cosmetics called 'natural' still contain preservatives, coloring agents and all the other things you can think of that sound very unnatural. (Begoun)

MYTH #13 PROPYLENE GLYCOL - Being promoted as being a beneficial humectant.

It is the most common moisturizing vehicle, other than water, in cosmetics. It has better permeation through the skin than glycerin and is less expensive; although it has been linked to more sensitivity reactions. Its use is being reduced and it is being replaced by safer glycols such as butylene and polyethylene glycol. (Winter)

A moisturizer that has been shown to provoke acne eruptions. (Chase) SEE HUMECTANTS

MYTH #14 ROYAL BEE JELLY - Promoted to nourish and moisturize the skin.

This substance is found in beehives. It is secreted from the digestive tubes of worker bees. The male bees and the workers eat royal jelly for only a few days after they are born, but the Queen Bee eats royal jelly all of her life. Because royal jelly is associated with the health and long life of the Queen Bee, it was believed that this substance could have some age-retarding properties. It does not.

There has been extensive research done on the value of royal jelly and the scientific consensus is that it is worthless for humans. Anyone who claims that it has special powers is a fraud. (Chase)

Eggs, milk, honey and royal bee jelly are other favorites of some moisturizer manufacturers. Without question, eggs are nourishing for the embryo, milk nourishing and life-sustaining for infants, and honey and royal bee jelly nectar for bees. When applied to the skin, however, they do little for you, although they may give a moisturizer a smoother consistency or a lush look. (Novick)

Highly touted as a magical ingredient in cosmetics to restore one's skin to youthfulness. If stored, royal jelly loses its capacity to develop Queen Bees. Even when fresh, there is no proven value in a cosmetic preparation. (Winter)

MYTH #15 SEAWEED - Promoted to nourish and moisturize the skin.

This plant has gelatinous properties. It is the major ingredient of the thin, clear masks that peel off in one piece. These masks allow the skin to build up a supply of water. Seaweed is also used in face creams and lotions where it gives body and substance to the products, not to the skin. (Chase)

MYTH #16 SODIUM LAURETH SULFATE- No claims made.

Sodium fatty acid soap, a relatively weak surfactant. Used as a wetting agent in the textile industry. Irritating to scalp and may cause hair loss. (Wright) SEE SODIUM LAUREL SULFATE

MYTH #17 SODIUM LAUREL SULFATE - No one making any claims about this one - and for good reason.

We examined an anionic detergent, sodium laureth sulfate, which is commonly found in soaps and shampoos, that would penetrate into the eyes, as well as systemic tissues (brain, heart, liver, etc.). SLS also showed long-term retention in tissues. Because SLS and related substances are widely used in many populations on a daily basis in soaps and shampoos, there is an immediate concern relating to the penetration of these chemicals into the eyes and other tissues. This is especially important in infants, where considerable growth is occurring, because a much greater uptake occurs by tissues of younger eyes and SLS changes the amounts of some proteins in cells from eye tissues. Tissues of young eyes may be more susceptible to alteration by SLS.

MYTH #18 TYROSINE - An amino acid which can help you attain a deep, dark tan.

Some tanning accelerator lotions do contain tyrosine. You can be sure they'll advertise it if they do - an amino acid that's essential to melanization (darkening) of the skin. But, melanization is an internal process and spreading lotion on the skin's surface does nothing to fuel it. Similar logic would have us trying to rub food through our pores to satisfy hunger. (Matarasso)

Manufacturer's claims for the efficacy of tan accelerators remain unproven; a recent, independent study of these products failed to demonstrate any augmentation of tanning. Indeed it is doubtful that sufficient amounts of tyrosine can penetrate to the level of the skin where it could enhance melanin production. (Novick)

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