

Dermatologists' Soft-Skin Secrets

1.10.12

Dermatologists dish on the ingredients they look for in their moisturizers.

Want to know what dermatologists use to moisturize their skin? Check out this list of their favorite skin hydrators, then pick up one of our favorite products that contain them.

Petrolatum: For seriously dry skin, nothing beats petrolatum-based moisturizer. Also known as petroleum jelly, the ingredient “forms an occlusive barrier on the skin to reduce loss of water,” says **Houston-based dermatologist Dr. Jennifer Peterson**. The staying power of this ingredient is tough to beat and it’s extremely effective at preventing water that’s in your skin from evaporating. Apply products like [Aquaphor Healing Ointment](#) (\$5.99) and [Vaseline Petroleum Jelly](#) (\$4.49) to chapped areas anywhere on the body, from the lips and hands to elbows and knees. The ingredient can feel greasy, though, which is why most women wouldn’t think of applying it to their complexion; it’s too heavy and can cause breakouts on normal and oily facial skin.



Ceramides: Ceramides are a type of fat found naturally in our skin. “As we age, we see more break down of this fat,” says **Peterson**, which can lead to dehydration in the skin. Like petrolatum, moisturizers with ceramides work by retaining moisture in the skin. The main difference, though, is that this ingredient has a more elegant feel and is far less greasy. Try [CeraVe Moisturizing Skin Lotion](#) (\$13.99) and [Curel Itch Defense Lotion](#) (\$7.99).

Hyaluronic acid: This ingredient, found naturally throughout the body, is a humectant, which means it attracts and holds water in the skin. “Incredibly, it can bind up to 1,000 times its weight in water, which can improve skin moisturization,” **Peterson** says. Hyaluronic acid is another crucial component of skin that decreases with age, which is why moisturizers made with the ingredient are so invaluable. **Peterson** believes this ingredient works best when used in combination with other hydrators. Apply a serum with hyaluronic acid (like [Derma e Hyaluronic Acid Rehydrating Serum](#), \$29.50) first, then follow with a ceramide cream.