

Natural Facial Essentials

Few Skincare Product Labels Tell the Whole Story

by Linda Sechrist



At age 25, Paula Begoun, author of *The Original Beauty Bible* and other bestselling books on skincare, makeup and hair care, read her first label on a skincare product she was using. Although she'd tried many different products to control her acne and eczema since age 11, she hadn't thought about the contents, which was

The skin, your protective organ, is meant to be "worn" for life. It is not a luxury, but a necessity to take the best possible care of it.

~Charlene Handel

partially why she was distraught to discover that acetone (nail polish remover) was the fourth ingredient listed.

That moment became the inspiration for Begoun's lifetime devotion to skincare research and education and customer advocacy. Today, as founder of the Seattle-based Paula's Choice Skincare, she continues to help women understand when product claims are misleading or factual.

Buyer Be Aware

One of Begoun's core conclusions is that the terms organic and all natural are largely responsible for fueling the misconception that all synthetic ingredients in cosmetics are automatically bad and that all organic or natural ingredients are automatically good. She further notes that many products labeled organic and natural include synthetic chemicals, meaning that the term organic doesn't apply to the entire formula. Fragrances are common synthetic ingredients, as is the triethanolamine that's often used to adjust the pH or as an emulsifying agent to convert acid to a salt, or stearate, as the base for a cleanser.

To help consumers avoid overpaying for skincare products which may not be as natural or organic as touted, Begoun encourages skepticism regarding marketing messages. She suggests that an important key is to choose the best formulation for an individual's skin type and specific skin concerns.

"There are no U.S. Food and Drug Agency-approved standards for the organic labeling of skincare products sold in salons and spas or over-the-counter. The cosmetics industry hasn't agreed on one set of standards either. U.S. Department of Agriculture certification is cost-prohibitive for most small cosmetic companies that use clean, certified organic ingredients, so some uncertified organic products exist and it's wise to read labels,"



**grand rapids
natural health**

Naturopathic Care
Family & Couple Therapy
Health Coaching
Weight Loss, Cleanse & Fertility Programs
Massage Therapy
Organic Facials
Sugaring Hair Removal

Mention this Ad to Receive
40% off Your First Spa Service

638 W Fulton, Suite B, Grand Rapids, MI 49504
616-264-6556
grnaturalhealth.com

Lakeshore Natural Skin Care

Safe. Non-Invasive. Effective.

"All Ingredients Come From Nature Only"

Advanced Skin Care Customized Just for YOU!

231-557-3619 10500 Chicago Drive
LakeshoreNaturalSkinCare.com Zeeland, MI 49464



explains Elina Fedotova, founder of the nonprofit Association of Holistic Skin Care Practitioners. She counsels that we Google any unfamiliar ingredient to learn if it's toxic or safe.

Fedotova, a cosmetic chemist and aesthetician who makes her professional skincare line, Elina Organics, by hand in a laboratory, compares the difference between salon and commercial products to fine dining versus fast food. "Salon products are made in far smaller quantities than mass-produced brands and offer higher concentrations of ingredients. They are generally shipped directly to the salon and have a higher turnover rate. Because they don't have to be stored for indeterminate periods or endure warehouse temperatures, they are fresher and more potent," she says.

Although a facial can easily be performed at home with salon or commercial products, Fedotova, who owns spas in Chicago and Kalamazoo, Michigan, recommends having a professional facial every four to five weeks. Charlene Handel, a certified holistic esthetician, holistic skin care educator and owner of Skin Fitness Etc., in Carlsbad, California, agrees.

Sequenced Steps

Handel chooses treatments that penetrate and nourish the layer of skin below the epidermis, the outermost layer, consisting of mostly dead cells, with 100 percent holistic (edible) products and freshly brewed organic tea compresses. "Without a gentle exfoliation, the first step in any effective facial, not even skincare formulas with penetration enhancers, can nourish the lower layer of live cells. One key nourishment among others is vitamin C, an antioxidant which brightens, protects against sun damage and promotes collagen production," advises Handel.

She explains that skin cells produced in the deepest layer gradually push their way to the epidermis every 30 days and die. Dead cells can pile up unevenly and give the skin's surface a dry, rough, dull appearance. As we age, cell turnover time increases to 45 or 60 days, which is why gentle sloughing is necessary. This can be done at home three times a week with a honey mask.

Another form of exfoliation

performed in a salon uses a diamond-tipped, crystal-free microdermabrasion machine to gently buff away the surface layer of skin.

An additional option is a light glycolic acid and beta hydroxy acid treatment. This can be purchased over the counter or prepared at home using organic papaya (glycolic) and pineapple (beta hydroxyl) for more even skin tone. These treatments, sometimes referred to as acid peels, can be applied to the face for no more than 10 to 15 minutes, typically every two to four

weeks or every few months.

Treatment serums, moisturizing lotions and eye and neck creams are all elements of a complete facial. The simplest sequence of application is layering from the lightest to heaviest—eye cream, serum and moisturizer. Give them a minute or two to absorb. No facial is complete without a sunscreen with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, applied last.

Linda Sechrist is a Natural Awakenings senior staff writer.

DIY Facial Treats



Elina DIY Facial

Dry complexion: Cleanse the skin with a mix of baking soda and coconut oil. Gently scrub on and rinse off.

Oily complexion: Cleanse the skin using a mixture of yogurt and baking soda. Gently scrub on and rinse off.

Refresh the skin after cleansing with distilled rose water or herbal tea, adding in a few drops each of lemon juice and a favorite essential oil. For dry skin, choose chamomile tea; for oily skin, go with burdock root tea and juniper berry essential oil.

Exfoliate the skin with a gentle, healthy alternative to chemical peels by massaging with organic papaya; its enzymes help dissolve dead cells. It also infuses skin with beta carotene and other beauty nutrients.

After rinsing skin, apply a mashed banana mask, which benefits all complexions by nourishing and moisturizing the skin. It's also high in anti-inflammatory vitamin B₆.

Remove the banana with a wet wash cloth, and then apply a favorite moisturizer. Dry skin does well with coconut oil. For very dry skin, use shea butter or sesame oil.

Use a zinc oxide-based natural sunblock, especially after a facial, because the skin is more sensitive to ultraviolet rays after exfoliation. Eating foods rich in antioxidants helps prevent sun damage.

Source: Courtesy of Elina Fedotova

Fruit Smoothie Mask

Prep time: 15 minutes

Increase sun protection with this antioxidant- and resveratrol-rich soothing smoothie mask. Use fresh, organic ingredients.

*6 medium strawberries
12 red grapes
½ banana
1 Tbsp honey*

Combine first three ingredients in a standard or bullet blender until mixture becomes creamy. Remove and put in a bowl. Gently fold honey into mixture.

Cleanse face.

Apply mask to skin, preferably with a fan brush, and lightly massage with fingertips for two minutes. Allow to sit on skin for 20 minutes.

Remove mask with warm water.

Follow with organic toner per skin type.

Source: Courtesy of Charlene Handel