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Liquid Exfoliants Are the Next Big Thing in Beauty—Here’s What You Need to Know

By Brigitt Early | January 25, 2019

Not that you need another excuse to go to Sephora, but...



“We asked [Dr. Anna Guanche](#), a board-certified dermatologist and celebrity beauty expert, for the lowdown on the product that promises to rejuvenate your skin without any abrasion.

“They’re ingredients—generally acids—that exfoliate the skin when topically applied,” says Guanche. But they aren’t scrubs, and they don’t contain abrasive particles. Still, they’re very effective: “Chemical exfoliants do a fantastic job of unclogging pores and releasing the dead skin cells that can lead to a dull complexion. You don’t necessarily need to mechanically scrub your face to get good exfoliation.”

“People of all skin types can benefit from a liquid exfoliant—even pregnant women who are typically advised against anti-aging products, especially those containing Retin-A, says Guanche. If you have oily or acne-prone skin, look for a liquid exfoliant with alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) and beta hydroxy acid (BHA). These ingredients break apart keratin and lower pH, helping to banish bacteria. If you have dry skin, opt for a product with AHA or poly hydroxy acid (PHA), since PHAs are milder and don’t cause as much irritation. And if you have Rosacea, or are prone to redness, try azelaic acid, a micro exfoliator that works to clear pores and fade excess pigmentation.



Pregnant or nursing women should share the ingredient list with their practitioners for clearance, but AHA and azaleic acid are generally regarded as pregnancy-safe.”

“Chemical exfoliators are powerful—even though they seem mild,” says Guanche. “Start low and go slow. Use a small amount in the evening at bedtime and apply a moisturizer immediately after.”

“If you are also using Retin-A, Guanche suggests alternating with the exfoliating acid to avoid irritation. Alternatively, use the exfoliating acid in the morning and your Retin-A at night (or vice-versa). Once your skin adjusts to the new product and routine, increase the frequency of use to two to three times per week, eventually working up to nightly use.”

“You should expect some results pretty soon—as early as a few days to a week,” says Guanche. And don’t be alarmed if you notice dry flakey skin or mild peeling. It’s a common side effect as your skin adjusts to chemical exfoliators. A quality moisturizing cream should help soothe any mild discomfort you may experience.”

The Best Liquid Exfoliants, According to Dermatologists



“It’s great for acne-prone skin, reduces redness, helps achieve a glow, and creates smoother, softer skin,” says Guanche.

<https://www.oprahmag.com/beauty/skin-makeup/a26024601/liquid-exfoliant-for-face/>