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### The Difference Between Hydrating and Moisturizing Your Skin

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Though they sound like the same thing—both sharing the goal of quenching parched skin—there’s a big difference between the two. Here’s what dermatologists want you to know so you can use the products that are best-suited for your skin’s unique needs.

#### **First, Is Your Skin Dry or Dehydrated?**

“It’s important to first understand the difference between ‘dry’ skin and ‘dehydrated’ skin, because there is a difference,” says Omaha, NE dermatologist Joel Schlessinger, MD.

“Dehydrated skin is a temporary state, where skin simply lacks water content. Dry skin is a condition, wherein skin makes an insufficient amount of lipids and oils to stay properly moisturized. Interestingly, skin can be dry and experience dehydration simultaneously.”

“If your skin is dehydrated, it is lacking water, and if your skin is dry, it is lacking oil,” explains New York dermatologist Marina Peredo, MD. “Hydration is the process of water absorption. Hydration equals water, and moisture equals oil.”

To this point, Dr. Schlessinger adds that “dehydrated skin benefits from hydrating ingredients that help boost the water content in the skin’s surface cells by pulling in moisture from either the air or from deeper layers of skin. Dry skin, however, benefits from moisturizing ingredients,

which form an occlusive barrier on dry skin, helping it to hold onto more of its own natural oils and moisture.”

## **Hydrating Ingredients to Look For**

To hydrate your skin, Dr. Peredo says to look for ingredients known as humectants, which help collect moisture in the environment (air) and bind it to the skin, allowing the skin cells to absorb the water and stay hydrated. “Hyaluronic acid is a good hydrator. Other examples are aloe vera, glycerin, urea and propylene glycol.” Dr. Schlessinger notes that honey and some forms of marine extracts/algae also have humectant properties.

“In general, humectants are lighter-weight and are found in gels, serums and lotions,” says Davie, FL dermatologist Marianna Blyumin-Karasik, MD. “It can be challenging to choose the right skin care, so if you have dehydrated, oily or combination skin, it’s ideal to use hydrators with lighter, water-replenishing ingredients. Some of my favorite hydrators are Neutrogena Hydro Boost Water Gel with Hyaluronic Acid for Dry Skin and Glow Recipe Watermelon Glow Pink Juice Moisturizer.”

## **Moisturizing Ingredients to Look For**

Moisturizing skin-care ingredients, on the other hand, are commonly referred to as emollients or occlusives. “Some popular moisturizers feature plant-based oils, such as coconut oil, almond oil, shea butter, cocoa butter and jojoba oil,” says Dr. Peredo. “These ingredients form a seal on the skin to keep water content inside your cells from escaping.”

Ceramides, squalane and dimethicone are also emollients, Dr. Karasik notes. “Occlusives include mineral oil, lanolin, castor oil and silicones. Both emollient and occlusive ingredients can be used in a variety of formulations, from lightweight creams and emulsions to heavier ointments. If you are prone to dry skin and have a fragile skin barrier, these types of heavier moisturizers are optimal. My favorite moisturizers are **Amethyst Skincare** Daily Nutrition Facial Treatment Oil, CeraVe Moisturizing Cream and Vanicream Moisturizing Ointment.”

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