

Beauty Decode the Beauty Aisle

BY ALISA HRUSTIC

Whether your routine is full of lotions and potions or you hang on to one holy grail product, skincare is a science, says Heather Woolery-Lloyd, M.D., director of ethnic skincare for the University of Miami Department of Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery. To build an effective regimen, it's crucial to understand how ingredients work and when to slather them on. Overwhelmed by all the lofty claims? Here's how to decipher the lingo on those bottles.

CLEANSER VS. FACE SCRUB

THE DIFFERENCE: Both can be used to wash your face, just in different ways. Cleansers remove dirt, oil, and makeup, because they contain surfac-

tants (soap-like molecules that trap impurities), says Dr. Woolery-Lloyd. Face scrubs can help cleanse but don't always act as makeup remover. Instead, these washes use tiny particles, like salt or sugar granules, to physically exfoliate by lifting away dead skin cells.

HOW TO USE THEM: Lather up with a cleanser morning and night, but pay attention to consistency. Go for creamy, milklike washes if you're sensitive and foamy formulas if you're oily, says Dr. Woolery-Lloyd. Face scrubs can be harsh, so use them no more than twice a week with a gentle hand, depending on your skin's sensitivity.

but they do different things. Toners are water-based and used to be full of skin-stripping alcohol for a "clean" feeling, but now "they're becoming more sophisticated," with gentle hydrators and beneficial ingredients like exfoliating acids, Dr. Woolery-Lloyd says. Still, toners generally don't make big promises as do serums, which are a



GETTY IMAGES



PREVENTION PICKS:

For oily skin:

Aveeno Clear Complexion Foaming Cleanser, \$7, drugstores

For sensitive/dry skin:

CeraVe Hydrating Facial Cleanser, \$15, drugstores

TONER VS. SERUM

THE DIFFERENCE:

These may feel similar and are applied between cleansing and moisturizing,

bit thicker and act as a vehicle for treatments like retinol and vitamin C.

HOW TO USE THEM:

Toners feel nice and are pleasant to try, but “there’s no real science” behind them, Dr. Woolery-Lloyd says. If you’re drawn to a certain ingredient, go for a serum—it will be more potent and have a bigger payoff, says Anne Chapas,

M.D., medical director of Union Square Dermatology in New York City.

PREVENTION PICK: **Olay Regenerist Retinol24 Night Serum, \$29, drugstores**



CREAM VS. GEL VS. LOTION

THE DIFFERENCE: These all have the same goal: to hydrate. But the texture depends on how much H₂O the moisturizer packs. Gels contain the most water and feel extremely lightweight. Creams go on heavy and are richer in humectants (which attract water to the

skin) like hyaluronic acid and glycerin. Lotions are a nice in-between choice, says Dr. Chapas.

HOW TO USE THEM: Moisturizer is typically your last step in the p.m. and applied before sunscreen in the a.m. To choose, tune in to your preferences and skin type, says Dr. Woolery-Lloyd. If you’re oily and acne-prone, opt for a gel. Sensitive, dry, and prone to redness?



You'll love a cream. Normal skin but need a little oomph without the grease? Try out a lotion.

PREVENTION PICKS:

Cream:

Kiehl's Ultra Facial Cream, \$32, kiehls.com

Lotion: **L'Oréal Revitalift Bright Reveal Brightening Day Moisturizer SPF 30**, \$20, drugstores

Gel: **Neutrogena Hydro Boost Gel Cream**, \$21.50, drugstores

SUNSCREEN VS. MOISTURIZER WITH SPF

THE DIFFERENCE: Both of these offer solid protection against the sun's harmful rays. But traditional sunscreens tend to be waterproof for a certain amount of time so you can go for a swim or a sweaty hike. Moisturizers with SPF feel lighter, hydrate, and sit well beneath makeup, but are total goners once you start to glisten.

HOW TO USE THEM: "The best sunscreen is the one you wear every day," says Dr. Woolery-Lloyd. Apply a minimum of SPF 30 in the morning as your last step and reapply every two hours for max protection. For traditional

sunscreens, this is no biggie—but if you're wearing a moisturizer with SPF under makeup, keep a powder sunscreen handy for midday touch-ups.

BB CREAM VS. TINTED MOISTURIZER

THE DIFFERENCE: They're both meant to even out the skin with a bit of coverage. But while a tinted moisturizer can replace a BB cream, the reverse doesn't always work. BB creams typically don't offer enough hydration. "BB and CC creams have more coverage, so there's more makeup in them," Dr. Woolery-Lloyd says. "Tinted moisturizer tends to be very lightweight, with the thinnest layer of coverage you could ever imagine."

HOW TO USE THEM: This depends on your endgame. If you want a bit more pigment, apply a BB cream after moisturizer. For a barely-there tint and skin-plumping moisture, go for a tinted moisturizer.

PREVENTION PICKS:

BB Cream:

Maybelline New York Dream BB Fresh Cream, \$9, drugstores

Tinted Moisturizer:

Lancôme Skin Feels Good Hydrating Skin Tint, \$35, lancome-usa.com

