

Topical Vitamin C and Skin Care

There is a plethora of skin care products available nowadays that list vitamins as one of the ingredients. You may wonder if your body can absorb these nutrients through the skin or is this just another advertising ploy? Despite claims to the contrary, there are only three antioxidants that have been proven to be well absorbed by the skin--selenium, vitamin E, and vitamin C. Vitamin C is naturally found in skin tissue. On the whole, it is a great antioxidant that slows the aging process. When the skin's supply of vitamin C is depleted--through sun exposure, smoking, or pollution--the skin's ability to repair free radical damage is compromised. The end result for your face is sun damage, wrinkles, and hyperpigmentation. In a recent double-blind study, participants had topical vitamin C applied to half of the face and a placebo to the other side. The results showed a significant improvement of the vitamin C-treated side. Once inside the skin, vitamin C neutralizes free radicals which would otherwise be stimulated by UV light. Results showed increased collagen formation and visible improvement in wrinkled skin. It is important to note that the body can only absorb vitamin C in the form of L-ascorbic acid. Products containing the vitamin C derivatives Ascorbic Acid, ascorbyl palmitate, or magnesium ascorbyl phosphate will not be absorbed topically. Look for products that contain at least 10% concentration of L-ascorbic acid. Remember that just because the bottle says 'Contains Vitamin C' does not mean it contains L-ascorbic acid.

About the Author

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