

Applying Vitamin A

**Topically
To Reverse Skin Ageing**
and to repair dry and sun damaged skin

Vitamin A
the healing nutrient for the skin



A report by Peter Jackson

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Introduction

I have been working with skin creams that contain therapeutic levels of vitamin A for more than 15 years and I have also been impressed by their positive effects on the skin.

It is nice to see that the experience that I have had with Vitamin A topically is now being backed up by independent research.

But Vitamin A skin creams should not only be considered for preventing and reversing aging. Because it is so important to the integrity to the skin, it should also be considered whenever the skin has been damaged.

The most common form of skin damage is of cause caused by the sun but, in my experience, dry, cracked skin and scarring all respond well to Vitamin A being applied directly to the affected areas.

The healing qualities of Vitamin A

As you might expect, applying vitamin A directly to the wounded area will get a quicker response than if Vitamin A is taken orally.

Also, Vitamin A is absolutely brilliant for sunburn. Apply it in the evening and you will feel the benefits by morning.

I have also found the use of Vitamin A in creams, provided the cream does not contain harsh ingredients or parabens, extremely helpful in dry skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that supports the use of Vitamin A creams in healing the skin, it is still Vitamin E that gets the most attention. Vitamin E is important but in my experience it is Vitamin A that makes the most difference.

Any good antioxidant skin cream should have a good balance of Vitamin A and Vitamin E.

Just recently there has been an increasing amount of attention given to Vitamin A by researchers for use in skin care products and anti wrinkle creams and it is for this reason that I have decided to write this report in order to summarise the outcome of two new studies.

Background

Wrinkled sagging skin does not have to be the inevitable outcome of ageing.

This is according to new research which is showing how certain antioxidant nutrients can help prevent and even reverse damage to your skin and anti aging.

Most of your wrinkles will come from the sun and this doesn't just mean when you are lying on the beach getting a sun tan. Most of your exposure will be when you are just roaming around in the outdoors.

Even if it isn't sunny, the sun rays will penetrate through the clouds.

Ultra violet light will enter your skin as photons which are absorbed by various substances including Retinyl Palmitate (Vitamin A). Apart from using up and depleting your skin of Vitamin A, Ultra Violet actually damages it as well.

Free radicals are created in your skin by Ultra Violet and if there is insufficient antioxidants like Vitamin A available, this will damage DNA. This in turn will mean that the outer layers of the skin become thinner offering less protection for the skin layers underneath.

The knock-on effect of this is that cells called melanocytes multiply, creating those dark spots. Also, deeper down, fibroblasts produce less collagen, and this means wrinkles and saggy skin.

So, if your skin becomes deficient in Vitamin A, this can set up a cascade of events which lead to skin which is less healthy and more prone to aging.

Aging skin is really the result of DNA damage to different kinds of skin cells. The cells on the outside of your skin, called keratinocytes, develop into keratosis (skin lesions) that may become cancerous.

Preventing Skin Aging

Vitamin A is the nutrient you should focus on for prevention. It helps control the rate of keratin accumulation and normalises DNA, and this means healthy cells that function better. It also improves collagen and elastin production (helping skin stay plump and supple), aids in normal pigment control and repairs old damage.

As the sun can affect your skin even when it is cloudy, its potential damage can build up over time. In extreme cases, too much sun exposure can cause you to lose as much as 80% of the vitamin A in your skin, and it usually takes days to restore these levels.

However, by applying Vitamin A directly to the skin, you can replenish it within a few days. Topical Vitamin A has been shown to reverse most of the signs of skin aging.

Two major studies support this viewpoint.

Antioxidant Skin Creams Can Rub Out Your Wrinkles say scientists from France

Recently internationally published research has further highlighted the antioxidant cell protection of certain vitamins that can be directly applied to the skin. Using a moisturiser with added vitamins really can help prevent wrinkles and may even reverse long-term skin damage caused by sun, scientists said recently.

In the first major study of its kind, French scientists have found that a skin product containing vitamins E and A in particular, significantly

slowed the formation of new wrinkles and partially reversed long-term damage caused by ultra-violet radiation.

This study was the first of its kind that gave evidence that applying antioxidants to the skin can protect against damage.

The study, part of a larger study of nutrition and health in Europe, looked at 160 French women over an 18 month period. They were split into 4 groups and the one group using vitamin creams clearly showed a marked improvement' said scientists.

In the same study, it was reported that regular applications of antioxidant vitamins to the skin not only inhibited further ultra violet damage, but also facilitated the repair of existing damage.

Vitamin A Helps Reduce Wrinkles Associated With Natural skin Aging.

In another study, this time reported in the Science Daily magazine, applying vitamin A to the skin appears to improve the wrinkles associated with natural aging and may help promote the production of skin-building compounds.

According to the research, wrinkles and brown spots associated with aging appear first and most prominently on skin exposed to the sun. Skin not exposed to the sun still ages but not so dramatically.

Skin loses its youthful appearance by becoming thinner, laxer and finely wrinkled. The best way to prevent this from happening it seems is to ensure that Vitamin A, particularly on skin that is exposed to the sun, is not depleted.

Scientists of the University of Michigan Medical School, assessed the effectiveness of vitamin A lotion in 36 elderly individuals (average age 87 years).

Researchers applied a lotion containing 0.4% percen Vitamin A to

participants' right or left upper inner arms, and lotion with no Vitamin A to the other arm, up to three times a week for 24 weeks.

Wrinkles, roughness and overall severity of aging were each graded on a scale from zero (none) to nine (severe) before treatment and two, four, eight, 16 and 24 weeks after beginning treatment.

In addition, 4-millimeter biopsy specimens of skin were taken from both arms at the beginning and end of the 24 week treatment period.

A total of 23 individuals completed the full study and 13 withdrew from the study prior to completion. When the researchers included the individuals who had dropped out of the study by assuming their skin did not change after their last measurement, wrinkles, roughness and overall aging severity were all significantly reduced in the Vitamin A treated area compared with the control arm.

The skin biopsies revealed that the Vitamin A increased the production of glycosaminoglycan and procollagen, structural components of the skin.

The authors found that topical Vitamin A improved fine wrinkles associated with aging. They concluded that the main reason for this were the significant increased levels of glycosaminoglycan and collagen production which increased cell production and improved the skins' ability to form new skin.

The researchers commented: 'Vitamin A treated aged skin is more likely to withstand skin injury and ulcer formation along with improved appearance.'

For this reason, a Vitamin A cream could also be an important consideration for healing newly formed scars and skin that has been damaged in other ways other than by the sun.

The research is described in the May issue of Archives of Dermatoloty, one of the JAMA/ Archives journals. (Arch Dermatol.2007;143:606-612

In the past, everyone believed that vitamin A creams would only treat photo-ageing damage from exposure to the sun. This is the first

systematic, double-blind study showing that it improves any kind of ageing and works on any part of the body making it useful for young and old people alike.

Daily prevention programme

From a preventative point of view, applying Vitamin A directly to the skin regularly is the best way to prevent wrinkles and reverse skin aging.

This and protection against the sun are the way forward.

Many people take Retin A (Retinoic acid which is synthetic derivative of Vitamin A) as an anti-wrinkle cream and for acne but this form of Vitamin A can be quite harsh and act as an irritant.

Far better is to go for a more natural form of Vitamin A known as Retinyl Palmitate or Retinyl Acetate. It's milder, highly effective and well tolerated even with sensitive skin.

Regular applications of Vitamin A creams will also result in less pigmented spots, and smoother skin. The outer layer of your skin, the epidermis, becomes healthier and plumper.

Always use a cream that is paraben and SLS free so that it does not irritate.

Other reports by Peter Jackson

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