THE RADIANT skin  SHINY hair

INSIDE:
The Newest Lunchtime Laser Head-to-Toe Vampire Facials Summer’s Best New Serums Amazing Makeovers
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**Q/A:**

**Does the percentage of vitamin C in a product matter?** Studies have shown that vitamin C is most effective when used at concentrations of at least 0.3% to 5% percent ascorbic acid, so higher concentrations may not always be necessary.

**Should I only use vitamin C in the morning, or are there benefits at night too?** It’s better to use antioxidant products during the day, as one of the larger generators of free-radical damage is UV rays from the sun. An older study on pig skin showed that when ascorbic acid was fully absorbed, it slowly decreased over three days after application. Whether or not this effect occurs in human skin has not been shown to my knowledge, but if it does, then applying vitamin C in the evening may provide similar effects as applying it during the day.

**I’m obsessed**

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"Vitamin C is a game changer in skin care," he says. “Outside of prescription topical ingredients, it’s one of the most impactful and well-studied.”

**Pure Motives**

Ascorbic acid (aka L-ascorbic acid) is the pure form of the vitamin, but it’s very unstable and prone to oxidation—it’s sensitive to heat, light and oxygen, especially in the presence of water. This also means it has a shorter shelf life. To improve its stability, cosmetic chemists developed derivatives of ascorbic acid—ascorbyl palmitate and sodium ascorbyl phosphate are the two most common—and often use them in products instead of ascorbic acid. “However, this requires a modification of the chemical structure of the vitamin to make it more stable,” Ko explains. "These effects help minimize changes in the skin associated with aging, such as fine lines and sun damage."

**Liquid Gold**

Ko loves vitamin C for its ability to protect skin from free radical damage, including that from UV exposure, environmental pollutants, smoke, alcohol, and even some fried foods. “It's backed by a large sum of research that shows it can improve sallowness and dark spots to brighten the skin, while also stimulating collagen production,” he explains. “These effects help minimize changes in the skin associated with aging, such as fine lines and sun damage.”

**I’m currently using a 10% ascorbic acid gel with ferulic acid, and my hyperpigmentation has definitely improved. I prefer lighter, gel-type products and serums, as I find them easier to wear under sunscreen or other products during the day. I’m actually currently working on developing my own ascorbic acid serum with prolonged stability.”

**Ko’s Kit:**

“Babor Melano CC SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic and Vivier C+E Fresh Pressed Daily Booster mirrors the vitamin C powder used in this product, which helps keep it fresh.”

**THE CSUITE**

**Cosmetic Chemist Stephen Alain Ko Shares What He Loves About Vitamin C**

BY BRITTANY BURHOP FALCON

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