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For great skin, learn these terms

Four amazing breakthroughs will net the ultimate payoff: a radiant, younger-looking you.

BY ALYSSA HERTZIG

PH-BALANCING PRODUCTS



You may not have thought about pH since high school chemistry class, but it's a big

deal to your complexion. "The skin's outer layer works to keep moisture in and irritants and bacteria out, and being at an optimal pH level affects how well the barrier can do its job," says Annie Chiu, M.D., director of the Derm Institute in Redondo Beach, CA. Your skin routine can make or break your pH level: Soaps, soap-based cleansers, and getting overzealous with acne treatments or alpha hydroxy acids can all throw skin's pH out of whack. "When this happens, your face gets dry, sensitive, prone to pimples, and more easily inflamed—the latter of which can speed up skin aging," says Whitney Bowe, M.D., a clinical assistant professor of dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City. To get things in check, switch to a mild, sulfate-free cleanser such as Cetaphil (\$13.99), "and avoid products that have *triclosan*, *sodium lauryl sulfate*, or *sodium laureth sulfate* listed on the ingredient label," says Chiu. If you suspect your anti-ager may be to blame (which is often due to the combination of ingredients, not any specific one), switch to something that's labeled *pH-optimized* or *pH-balancing*. We like Phace Bioactive, a brand that's all pH-optimized formulas.

PHACE BIOACTIVE
Illuminating Serum, \$92 (15 readers will win one; see page 154 for details).



TOPICAL PROBIOTICS



By now you know how good probiotic-rich foods are for your digestive system—and

they can help do wonders for your looks, too. "Eating probiotics can help regulate your body's inflammatory response not only in your gut but also in your skin," says Bowe. "Preliminary research suggests they can help treat skin conditions like acne and rosacea. I tell my patients to eat five to 10 servings a week of natural sources, such as yogurt, miso soup, kefir, and kombucha." Then, hit the skin-care aisle and pick up one of the new creams or serums that contain probiotics. "Though ingesting these microorganisms is still the best way to reap their benefits, research indicates that topical probiotics may trigger healthy fat production in the skin, which helps it hold in moisture," says Bowe. "Some probiotics help repair skin's outer layer, while others kill harmful bacteria." To soothe a red, irritated complexion, we like Clinique's probiotic-spiked Redness Solutions line. To help calm breakouts, try the yogurt-rich Éminence Organic Skin Care Clear Skin Probiotic Masque (\$54).

CLINIQUE
Redness Solutions Daily Relief Cream With Probiotic Technology, \$48.



INFRARED-A RAYS



As any and every dermatologist will tell you: Applying broad-

spectrum SPF on your face every day is the best way to prevent UV-induced spots, wrinkles, and skin cancer. But now, skin pros say that another part of the electromagnetic spectrum could be just as worrisome. Infrared-A rays—known as IRA rays—live at the end of the spectrum. They're long, so they can reach much deeper into skin, and they're nasty little guys. "We know UV radiation causes skin cancer and aging, but UV rays make up only about 7 percent of solar light. Over half of it is IRA rays, which can destroy skin's collagen and elastin, leading to lines, sagging, and discoloration," says Mona Gohara, M.D., an associate clinical professor of dermatology at Yale School of Medicine. Broad-spectrum sunscreens do a great job of protecting us from UV rays, but most don't guard against IRAs—yet. Beauty brands are starting to offer products, such as Philosophy Ultimate Miracle Worker, to fill the void. And Chiu notes that an antioxidant serum with coenzyme Q10 will help block IRAs; Juice Beauty Antioxidant Serum (\$45) is a good one.

PHILOSOPHY
Ultimate Miracle Worker Multi-Rejuvenating Cream Broad Spectrum SPF 30, \$75.



POLLUTION DEFENSE



Unless you live way off the grid, your lovely skin gets battered by some rather ugly stuff every day.

"Pollutants in the air can penetrate skin, causing inflammation and breakdown of collagen, which leads to wrinkles and spots," says Chiu. In one study, researchers tracked women who lived in both rural and urban areas for over 20 years and found that the city dwellers ended up with significantly more brown spots and lines. But you don't have to relocate to the Amazon to keep your skin smooth and even. First, *always* wash your face before bed. "Otherwise, pollutant particles can clog pores," says Chiu. Then, apply a good antioxidant serum or moisturizer every morning. "Antioxidants mop up the free radicals that we're exposed to every day, which stops them from doing harm," says Chiu. Some of the best are green tea, white tea, vitamin C, and resveratrol; try the white tea-loaded Origins A Perfect World Age-Defense Moisturizer (\$43). For an extra boost, slather on a pore-cleansing mask once a week. The new Kiehl's Cilantro & Orange one, which is designed to draw out environmental impurities from the skin, contains bitter orange, "a great source of antioxidants that help protect against exposure to pollutants," says Bowe.

KIEHL'S
Cilantro & Orange Extract Pollutant Purifying Masque, \$32.

