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BEAUTY

true—"people with darker skin tones visibly age about 10 years later than those with white skin," says Dr. Taylor—there are sneaky saboteurs unique to us that require specific precautions like these.

WEAR SPF DAILY

"Sunscreens should be an essential part of every woman's skin-care regimen, no matter her skin color or ethnicity," says dermatologist and *Cosmo* contributor Whitney Bowe, MD. Despite this, 65 percent of African-American patients surveyed in a recent Skin Cancer Foundation poll admit they never use it. If you skip SPF because of ashiness (the top complaint our derms hear), look for chemical sunscreens that contain avobenzone. They sink into skin, rather than sit on top of it, and absorb UV light, says dermatologist Joshua Zeichner, MD. However, if you have sensitive or acne-prone skin, Dr. Zeichner recommends a gentler, barely perceptible, noncomedogenic micronized zinc oxide (like Neutrogena's, above).

PROACTIVELY TREAT SPOTS

"Skin discoloration is the number one reason women of color come into my office," says Cheryl Burgess, MD, a dermatologist in D.C. Pigment-making cells (aka melanocytes) respond to any form of injury (inflammation from UV rays, acne, even excess rubbing) by producing more melanin, which can leave a long-lasting mark on the surface of the skin, explains Dr. Bowe. Daily SPF—whether as part of a treatment product (L'Oréal's, here, has glycolic acid to fade spots) or snuck into your makeup (like CoverGirl's foundation, above)—is the

easiest way to prevent an uneven tone. To target existing hyperpigmentation, our derms suggest hydroquinone. "It's one of the most powerful ingredients because it stops the production of pigment at the source by blocking tyrosinase, the enzyme that makes melanin," says Dr. Bowe. While effective, high doses of prescription versions can cause unwanted skin lightening, so try a less intense, OTC version (like this one by Urban Skin Rx).

BANISH BREAKOUTS... GENTLY

While we may have won the genetic jackpot when it comes to wrinkles, the opposite is true when it comes to acne. Studies have shown that breakouts are more common in African-American women than in white women. Possibly worse than the pimples themselves: the brown marks (known as post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation) that linger for months after a zit heals. If you're tempted to aggressively treat acne, stop! "Any irritation, such as that caused by strong acne medications like retinoids, can lead to hyperpigmentation," explains Dr. Bowe. Your best bet: a salicylic acid-spiked lotion (try Paula's Choice, here), which gently exfoliates, preventing clogged pores. A twice-weekly nonabrasive scrub (like Dr. Sturms, specifically formulated for WOC) helps with oil buildup.



1. NEUTROGENA Sheer Zinc Dry-Touch Sunscreen SPF 50, \$12, drugstores
2. L'ORÉAL PARIS Revitalift Bright Reveal Brightening Day Moisturizer SPF 30, \$20, lorealparisusa.com
3. COVERGIRL Queen Collection All Day Flawless 3-in-1 Foundation, \$10, drugstores
4. URBAN SKIN RX Even Tone Night Treatment, \$68, urbanskinrx.com
5. PAULA'S CHOICE SKINCARE Calm Redness Relief 1% BHA Exfoliant, \$27, paulaschoice.com
6. DR. BARBARA STURM Enzyme Cleanser for Darker Skin Tones, \$77, molecular-cosmetics.com