

Our Specifics On Ingredients

As you can imagine, we have a lot to say on products and ingredients. Beyond being a fascinating combination of science and the senses, the practice of skincare at Heyday is about being able to give and empower others to take care of themselves.

If there's one thing that's deeply personal to a Skin Therapist, it's the products we choose to work with, to recommend to friends, family, and clients we care for—and to allow on our own skin for hours each day, every week.

At Heyday, we look at ingredients through three lenses—those we embrace, those we evaluate, and those we avoid. Within those categories, we mince the details and mind the evolution. That pragmatically progressive position may not always yield the catchy headlines, but we feel it's important given the diversity of our team and our clients in both beliefs and goals.

This document is living and breathing, as are the constant conversations with our brand partners around how they are continuing to evolve positively with the cosmetics industry. When it comes to skincare, living your Heyday—showing up as your best self every day—starts with the right ingredients.

Ingredients We *Embrace*

We embrace ingredients that bring out the best in skin without compromising the way the skin naturally behaves. Those ingredients include plant-based botanicals, clean, clinically-proven cosmeceuticals, gentle surfactants and emulsifiers, progressive preservative systems, physical sunscreens, and natural brightening agents.

We Embrace	What & Why	We Prefer
Powerful, Plant-Based Botanicals	We reach for the best from nature to target the top concerns we see, like dehydration, breakouts, sensitization, congestion. These ingredients must be smartly surrounded by other components to get results and do so safely.	We prefer the whole garden of time-tested and reliable plant-based ingredients from aloe vera to calendula to countless fruit and seed extracts and oils.
Clean, Clinically-Proven Cosmeceuticals	We all want results, and many of nature's gifts must be harnessed or are better harnessed in a laboratory for strength and stability when delivered in a cosmetic formula.	We prefer time-tested cosmeceuticals that have clinical proof towards their claims, including retinoids, peptides, plant stem cells, hydroxy acids, stable, synthetic Vitamin C derivatives, and more.
Gentle Surfactants & Emulsifiers	Surfactants and emulsifiers are used to bind ingredients together in a formula, like oil and water, and give them a range of abilities, including thickening, foaming, staying together, slipping and gliding, and/or rubbing in. If the active ingredients (those botanicals or cosmeceuticals) are like the engine of the car, imagine these ingredients as a significant part of the body that holds it together and lets it drive somewhere.	In surfactants, we prefer gentler varieties like decyl glucoside, coco betaine, sodium cocoyl isethionate, coco glucoside, soapwort, and others, often paired with hydrators like glycerin or oil. In emulsifiers, we look for cetearyl alcohol, cetearyl glucoside, sorbitan olivate, cetearyl olivate, xanthan gum, plant waxes, and others that safely keep a formula from separating and allow it to be easily usable everyday.
Progressive, Effective Preservative Systems	While preservatives are a bad word in the food world, preservatives are absolutely essential in cosmetics to ensure our products remain both effective and bacteria- and mold-free through their intended lifespan.	We prefer preservative systems with natural bases, like rosemary extract, Vitamin E, potassium sorbate, witch hazel, radish root ferment, benzoic acid, and others.
Broad Spectrum Physical Sunscreens	Sunscreens are a must, protecting us from skin cancer and the source of 90% of the signs of aging.	We prefer broad-spectrum physical sunscreens like non-nano zinc oxide and titanium dioxide that do not penetrate the skin and protect us shortly after application, like a mirror reflecting UVA/UVB rays. (See below regarding chemical sunscreens.)
Natural Brightening Agents	Preventing and fighting pigmentation is a common concern of our clients. We believe in progressively, not aggressively targeting this concern.	We prefer natural brighteners like arbutin, bearberry, mulberry, licorice, lactic acid, kojic acid, and niacinamide. We also reach for advanced tools in facials (we call them Enhancements) to target pigmentation concerns, like peels, light therapy, microdermabrasion, and others.)

Ingredients We *Evaluate*

We evaluate ingredients that require a deeper dive into specifics, including the role it serves in a formulation and/or how it is sourced and produced. Some ingredients are increasingly and conveniently vilified as a group, but entire categories like "alcohols" or "glycols" or "silicones" can't be treated all as one, as their names simply imply their literal chemical composition.

We Evaluate

What & Why

We Prefer

Chemical Sunscreens

Chemical here means the process by which these sunscreens work – by absorbing the sun's rays into your skin, converting the harmful rays, and releasing them back out as heat. So many buzzworthy (and often fear-based) headlines fly around these sunscreens. While we believe it's important to stay abreast of the latest scientific studies, chemical sunscreens do play an important role in protection.

We prefer chemical sunscreens that have been well-studied for their effects on both humans and the environment. We will always lean into the trade-off of wearing a chemical sunscreen versus the potentially permanent damage of consistent UV exposure. Chemical sunscreens are also an important complement to physical sunscreens depending on your use or activity (i.e., if you're playing a sport, a physical sunscreen wipes off with one swipe of a towel.) Studies continue to evolve around which chemical sunscreens are the safest and most effective.

Glycols

Glycols are a chemical family of compounds (going back to high school chem, they have two -OH groups added to them). They can act as a humectant that binds moisture, a penetration enhancer, and/or an antimicrobial supporting agent.

With our partner brands, we evaluate what the function of the specific glycol is. We prefer alternatives to some of the more currently-controversial glycols (see Ethoxylated Ingredients below), including PG (propylene glycol, which can be an irritant), PPG (polypropylene glycol), and limit PEG (polyethylene glycol), but discuss with our partners brands the purpose and processing of the ingredient. (For more, [this](#) is a wide-ranging study of glycols in cosmetics.)

Silicones

Silicones are a chemical family of compounds derived from silica. They are used for their slip and feel, spreadability, moisturizing properties, light occlusal/protective layer quality, and have little track record of irritation or allergies.

We prefer silicones deployed smartly in a formula, like in a physical sunscreen to help it spread on your skin or a lightweight, moisturizing protectant (like [this study](#) shows). When possible, we steer away from cyclic silicones (where the molecular structure is a closed ring), as their breakdown in the environment can be more challenging.

Alcohols

Alcohols are a chemical family of compounds (with one -OH group). Depending on the type, some have drying and degreasing properties that strip surface oil while others help the skin retain moisture or create a workable texture.

We prefer alcohols in the formula be of the fatty alcohol variety (like cetearyl alcohol) which are harmless and help with texture or moisture. We steer away from drying alcohols like SD alcohol that can feel "clean" to someone with oily skin, unless they are used very targetedly as a spot treatment; they should never appear high up in a formula's ingredient list.

Ethoxylated Ingredients

'Ethoxylated ingredients' are a family of compounds that have undergone 'ethoxylation,' or the process of reacting with ethylene oxide. They serve a variety of purposes from surfactants to emulsifiers to penetration enhancers and go by names like PPGs, PEGs, polysorbates, and various compounds ending in -eth. They are controversial because the ethoxylation process can yield a toxic byproduct called 1,4-dioxane, which then has to be stripped and cleaned away before being used in a formula.

We lean towards natural and botanical versions of what these ingredients do in formulas. We continue to evolve away from these ingredients as the industry does as a whole. [Studies](#) continue to dig into just how much of the byproduct actually makes its way into high-quality cosmetic formulas, and at that point, what impact it has on the skin or body. For any brands that have these ingredients, we discuss if the vacuum-stripping method has been applied to their raw materials/sourcing, which removes any impurities prior to formulation.

Evolving Preservative Systems

We keep an eye on preservative systems that are being reviewed for more progressive options, like phenoxyethanol, and work with our vendors to understand how they are evolving and staying ahead of developments.

We prefer progressive, effective preservative systems with a more natural base, whenever possible. As of right now, we support the use of phenoxyethanol as an effective preservative per the [study](#) commissioned by the E.U. who has far stricter cosmetic regulations than the U.S.

Ingredients We *Avoid*

We avoid ingredients that are aggressive, unnecessary, and most importantly, have adverse effects on the skin or body as proven by sample size-worthy scientific studies.

We Avoid	What & Why	We Prefer
Harsh Surfactants or Emulsifiers	We avoid harsh surfactants and emulsifiers like ethanolamines (DEA, MEA, TEA) or sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS) and others due to their overactive, irritation potential.	We prefer gentler surfactants like decyl glucoside, coco betaine, sodium cocoyl isethionate, coco glucoside, soapwort, and others, often paired with hydrators like glycerin or oil. In emulsifiers, we look for cetearyl alcohol, cetearyl glucoside, sorbitan olivate, cetearyl olivate, xanthan gum, plant waxes, and others that safely keep a formula from separating and allow it to be easily usable everyday.
Aggressive Depigmenting Agents	We avoid ingredients that aggressively bleach rather than progressively treat pigmentation, like hydroquinone, a known carcinogen that is banned outside of the US. This space in cosmetics has been littered with products and ingredients with complex cultural and colorism implications.	We prefer botanical-based brightening alternatives like arbutin – or seeing a cosmetic dermatologist for laser treatments for deeper pigmentation or scar healing work.
Artificial Color	We avoid artificial color. It's shockingly common in many big-brand formulas and it does zero for efficacy. We care about healthy skin, not fun-looking formulas.	We let color be color, naturally. Calendula cream is yellow because the flower is yellow!
Synthetic Fragrances & Phthalates	We avoid synthetic fragrance, an incredibly common cause of skin irritation. We do, however, believe scent is an incredibly important part of life – and some unscented laboratory samples smell pretty pungent.	We prefer safe concentrations and combinations of natural, essential oils and/or botanical extracts that are in the product for their skin benefits firstly – and oh-by-the-way smell great, secondly.
Widely-Rejected Preservative Systems	We avoid preservatives that are clinically-proven to cause irritation, endocrine disruption, or carcinogenic potential, such as parabens, triclosan, methylisothiazolinone, BHT/BHA, formaldehyde, and numerous others.	We prefer potent and progressive preservative systems with a more natural base, whenever possible.
Phthalates	We avoid phthalates which show up as plasticizers and lubricants in cosmetics, and often are hidden within the ingredients of artificial fragrance.	We prefer the many evolved alternatives that create a cleaner cosmetic formula. Phthalates are just not necessary in skincare formulas and studies have linked them to adverse effects on endocrine and reproductive health.
Petrolatum & Mineral Oil	Petrolatum (and mineral oil) have been employed for decades as a moisturizer. Most 'no' conversations revolve around calling it 'toxic' due to its origin (petroleum, which is natural) or fears of contamination through processing. The more important reason we put it on our 'avoid' list is its intensely occlusive property. It's like saran wrap for the skin, and we believe that occlusive action in everyday skincare is not ideal for encouraging normal skin function.	We prefer oils like jojoba, olive, coconut (as part of a formulation, not on its own), butters like shea or cocoa, waxes like candelilla or carnauba, or even some silicone bases. They provide properties that encourage moisturizing with a lighter occlusive to promote healing while respecting the skin's need to breathe.