



Pucker Up: Your Guide to Soft Lips and Fresh Breath

Valentine's Day is sneaking up on us. It's happening whether you prefer to celebrate it loud and proud, hit the town with your gal pals, or strictly believe it's a Hallmark holiday meant to torture us single souls.

But in honor of the holiday, we've put together your ultimate guide to making yourself kiss ready.

Kissing! It's actually really good for you, it has an incredible amount of health benefits, so much so that it's practically a wellness tip.

"Your lips are filled with so many nerves, the second you start kissing, it sends messaging to your brain very quickly, and it starts releasing all the feel good chemicals—the dopamine and serotonin, that makes you feel very happy," says Andrea Demirjian, "The Kissing Expert" and author of *Kissing: Everything You Wanted to Know About One of Life's Sweetest Pleasures*.

"It dilates your blood vessels because blood starts rushing through your body, as your heart is pumping faster, and the blood is going to all your nether regions to make you feel aroused and excited. It makes your heart go faster, but it also simultaneously lowers your blood pressure, so there is a funny little dichotomy that's occurring in your body.

"It boosts your immune system because when exchanging saliva, everyone has some bacteria in your mouth, and some bacteria is good for you. You've then got your unique cocktail with that person, and you create your own supreme little immune system, which helps keep you healthier. Kissing also creates a lot of saliva in your mouth and saliva washes away the plaque in your mouth. You're are going to be the poster child of your dentist.

"And a vigorous makeout session in an hour's worth of real deep passionate kissing burns 90 calories. And it gives you a rosy glow, plumped freshness in your lips."

Wow, with all those health benefits, your doctor is practically prescribing a makeout session. But first, let's get you makeout ready, from fresh breath to kissable lips and makeup that'll last.

Softer Lips, Stat

Scrub away dry spots first and foremost with a lip scrub. There are so many incredible lip scrubs that quickly, yet gently, get the job done. After a quick scrub (scrub on, then gently scrub off with a washcloth), a lip mask will hydrate deeper than any chapstick can. Then swipe on a moisturizing lip balm, which will stick around even after a few cocktails and smooches.

First, Scrub-A-Dub

Lip Scrub, **Kari Gran**, \$16, is comprised of organic sugar and organic chamomile powder, which calms while exfoliating. Agave Sugar Lip Scrub, **Bite Beauty**, \$18, is your secret weapon; it exfoliates and conditions lips with raw brown sugar, pineapple enzymes and agave syrup. (And, it's especially fun because it smells like vanilla cake batter.) Balmy Nights, **Ilia**, \$26, is especially convenient in it's stick form. Perfect for on the go or a mess-free application. And tiny granules of volcanic stone scrubs away dry skin, while shea butter and jojoba oil soothe and hydrate.