

HEALTH MATTERS

When should you start using eye cream?

Home to the thinnest skin on your body, the eye area starts to show signs of wear and tear by your 20s. Overtime in the office, that extra glass of wine, and even smiling all conspire to speed up the aging process. The eyes are also the first place people look on your face. According to Marie Claire Magazine these are great eye-opening rules to follow:

1. COUNTING CROWS

Wearing sunglasses prevents squinting, which causes crow's-feet, explains Dr. Robert Grant, plastic surgeon-in-chief at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center. Sunscreen will also help, but the reason that you suddenly start to see fine lines in your late 20s and early 30s happens under your skin. "Once your body starts to decrease the amount of sebum it produces, you need to

moisturize to keep the outermost keratin layer--our natural sun protection factor--intact," explains Grant. "If you allow your skin to dry out, it will get more sun damage." But before you start slathering on heavy eye balms that can clog pores and cause bumps, first try a lightweight gel.

If you already have noticeable crow's-feet, vitamin A--derived retinols can help smooth them out by boosting collagen production in the area. Grant likes over-the-counter retinols (in contrast to stronger, prescription retinoids) because they're less drying and easier to tolerate. And for those who are especially expressive, Botox can help soften your smile lines. A topical formula is currently in FDA trials for usage around the eyes, but approval is still years away.

2. BAGGAGE HANDLING

The biggest reason for puffiness

around the eyes is allergies, according to Cambridge, Massachusetts, dermatologist Dr. Ranella Hirsch. And rubbing will only thicken the skin and cause darkening, especially in pale complexions. "When you hear on the news that pollen counts are up, take an over-the-counter antihistamine for two or three weeks and you'll prevent most swelling," Hirsch says. For additional soothing, "de-puff with an eye roller. Keep it in the fridge, because the cooling effect really goes a long way."

If you're past your early 30s and have tried the anti-allergy approach without success, your heavy baggage could be caused by gravity, not the change in seasons. "When you're young, the fat below your eyes lives in a collagen baggie. But as you get older, the bag is weakened because you're not producing as much collagen and the fat herniates into a hound-dog look," says

Hirsch, who recommends using an injectable filler (she prefers Restylane) to firm the skin and hold up the fat pad. "For less than \$500, you can get real results that last 12 to 15 months. You don't need much product, and it can take years off of your face," she says. A less invasive alternative is using an eye cream with peptides. "Peptides are the building blocks of the skin's protein," explains Hirsch. Applying them topically gives skin the ingredients to rebuild and hold the fat pad in place.

3. BRIGHT IDEA

There are typically two causes of dark circles: an actual darkening of the skin due to genetics and sun damage, or shadows created from sunken valleys above the cheekbones. For both problems, New York City dermatologist Dr. David Rosenberg recommends injecting fat or Restylane to plump the hollowness (cost: about \$4,000 for potentially permanent fat and about \$1,500 for Restylane, which lasts up to two years). And since the skin here is almost transparent, "fat bleaches out the area since it's pure white."

Brightening formulas can also even the overall skin tone but must be combined with daily sunscreen use to prevent further darkening. Hirsch suggests layering antioxidant lycopene under sunscreen for extra protection.

4. TOP SHELF

As collagen thins and skin loses elasticity, the upper eyelids can droop, creating what Rosenberg calls "hooding." While applying creams to the upper lids was once a no-no, new formulas specifically target this sagging area, tightening with caffeine or promoting collagen production with peptides. However, if you're prone to dry skin, Hirsch cautions against caffeine-based creams because they dehydrate in order to de-puff and firm. "You're good for two hours, but then you look like death," she says.

If topical creams aren't enough for your tired-looking lids, Rosenberg suggests two surgical options: trimming away the excess skin at the lashline or an endoscopic brow-lift (cost: \$2,000 to \$7,000 for each procedure). With gravity's pull, eyebrows fall as we get older, and "as the brow gets lower, the more skin droops," Rosenberg says. Raising the brow with tiny hairline incisions lifts the upper eyelid skin, making eyes appear more open and youthful. "It's a 30-minute procedure, and the results last for a decade." Now that's foresight.

EVENT FaB:

May 27th-28 11am-4pm
Nordstrom, Washington Square:
"Mascara Madness" Buy 2 Mascaras, get 1 Free. Be sure to visit the Giorgio Armani Counter for 'Eyes to Kill', my #1 choice for mascara.

Hope to see you all there! For questions and comments please visit our Facebook Page: FaB Living w/Rebekah Star. Until next week, Live Fabulously!



Dr. Billy R. Flowers (above center) and his skilled staff are ready to help those in need.

THE SPINA COLUMN™

An ongoing series of questions and answers about America's natural healing profession.

Part 3. ALLERGIES: Why Chiropractic often works more effectively than drugs.

Q: Nothing else has ever really helped my allergies. What can Chiropractic possibly do?

A: First, take a look at the word itself. "Allergy" is a shortened form of "altered energy." Way back when patients first complained of allergic symptoms, it was obvious to the physician who coined the term that somehow, the body's energy configuration had shifted and caused the problem. Chiropractors now know that the central nervous sys-

tem controls the body's flow of energy. We also know that when the spinal column is out of alignment, it interferes with the central nervous system's flow of energy. When those nerves leading to the eyes or nose or throat are being interfered with, "altered energy" symptoms result. By correcting the source of the problem, not

just the symptoms, Chiropractic can often provide complete, lasting relief. Without drugs or drowsiness. For help with your allergy-related problems or answers to any questions you might have about your health, your will find that Chiropractic is often the answer. Call us for an appointment today.

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Heart Disease Predictor Found

UC Davis researchers have discovered that a blood component linked with inflammation can predict coronary artery disease in African-Americans.

Known as lipoprotein-associated phospholipase A2, the blood factor is also associated with but does not accurately predict heart-disease risk in Caucasians. The findings are published in the current issue of the Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism.

"This study suggests that inflammation may be a more important mechanism in heart disease for African-Americans than it is for Caucasians and increases our growing understanding of how heart-disease processes vary in different ethnic groups," said Lars Berglund, senior study author and associate dean for research at the UC Davis School of Medicine. "The more we appreciate such differences, the better we can individualize treatment and prevention approaches."

Lp-PLA2 was recently identified as a marker for the inflammatory processes involved in atherosclerosis. It is considered key to the progression and rupture of fatty plaques that can block coronary arteries and lead to heart attacks.

Although the test for Lp-PLA2 is widely available, Berglund said it is too soon to recommend widespread testing to affect treatment decisions. The study population was not representative of the general population as all participants already had symptoms of heart disease.

Berglund's team plans further studies of Lp-PLA2 and other inflammatory components of the blood in a wider range of patients to get a clearer picture of roles in predicting heart disease for different groups. The outcomes of his current study, however, give him hope that African-Americans at high risk for heart disease will one day be treated for inflammation more aggressively and earlier in the disease process.