

Natural Retinol Alternative Powers Skincare Renewal Products

Bakuchiol, EXPERTS AGREE, OFFERS RETINOL-LIKE BENEFITS WITHOUT IRRITATION

Dermatologists have long considered retinol to be the gold standard topical ingredient for skin rejuvenation.

But experts say there's a new, natural ingredient on the block. Bakuchiol (pronounced bah-KOO-chee-all), a natural retinol alternative, offers patients the skin renewal benefits of retinol without the irritation, redness, peeling and sun-sensitivity.

Scientists have shown clinically that bakuchiol reduces the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, improves skin firmness, brightens skin and improves skin tone and texture.

Sound like retinol? So far, but what bakuchiol has also demonstrated in studies is that, when applied to the skin, it does not cause the skin irritation and sun-sensitivity that results in so many patient aversions to using retinol products.

"... bakuchiol is comparable with retinol in its ability to improve photoaging and is better tolerated than retinol. Bakuchiol is promising as a more tolerable alternative to retinol," authors wrote in a research paper published in 2018 in the *British Journal of Dermatology*.¹

In the 12-week randomized, double-blind study of 44 patients who applied either bakuchiol 0.5% cream twice daily or retinol 0.5% cream daily, researchers found both topicals significantly decreased wrinkle surface area and hyperpigmentation, with no statistical difference between the compounds.

But the bakuchiol users reported less facial skin scaling and stinging, according to the study.

Burt's Bees Renewal line of products features bakuchiol for these very reasons, according to Hemali Gunt, Ph.D., head of clinical and scientific affairs at Burt's Bees, a leader in evidence-based natural skincare. The search for natural ingredients suitable for use in an aging population with sensitive skin resulted in the development of a bakuchiol-based skincare regimen. The Renewal line targets aging skin, by providing firming, hydrating and skin brightening benefits, with products including a cleanser, eye cream, spot treatment, night cream and more.

And it's natural

Another plus given today's consumer demand for natural products is that while retinol in skincare topicals comes from animal sources or is synthetically-derived in the lab, bakuchiol is a natural extract pressed from the seed of the bakuchiol plant, Dr. Gunt said.

Bakuchiol likely is the hottest natural ingredient on the market, according to dermatologist Joshua Zeichner, M.D., director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital, New York.

"There's definitely an increasing consumer demand for natural skincare products," Dr. Zeichner said. "With the demand has come an influx of natural skincare products. There are many different natural brands available over-the-counter. The problem is many of them are lacking data, so we really don't know how effective some of these natural products are and which products are making unsubstantiated marketing claims."

That's not the case with bakuchiol, which has been well-studied in skin and has been shown to effectively strengthen skin and stimulate collagen, according to Dr. Zeichner.

"While retinol is an outstanding ingredient that I like my patients to use, there are just some people who have sensitive skin and cannot tolerate it. We're always looking for a retinol alternative for this population of patients. That's where bakuchiol fills an unmet need," Dr. Zeichner said.

A skin renewal symphony

While bakuchiol is a featured and powerful ingredient in skincare products, it's not the only ingredient to work toward the goal of skin renewal. And it shouldn't be the only thing that consumers look for when choosing quality skincare. Rather, it's

a combination of ingredients that make a great product, according to Dr. Gunt.

For example, consumers don't want harsh ingredients in their skincare products. The ingredients in the Renewal line are of natural origin, and the line is formulated without synthetic fragrances, dyes, parabens, sulfates and phthalates, according to Dr. Gunt.

"Our whole formula approach utilizes natural ingredients," Dr. Gunt said. "Waxes, oils and butters form a product's matrix, and to that we add a few specific, well-researched ingredients to correct a particular skin condition. The product matrix or base of waxes, oils and butters is inherently powerful and provides multiple functional benefits."

In our clinical work, we have shown that the nature-based bakuchiol regimen was well tolerated in a challenging sensitive skin population while producing improvement in smoothness, clarity, radiance, overall appearance, and global anti-aging after four weeks of use. The subjects with eczema/atopic dermatitis did not experience worsening barrier function, the subjects with rosacea did not experience increased flushing or inflammatory papules, and the cosmetic intolerance syndrome subjects were able to use the products without facial sensory discomfort.

Dr. Zeichner said he is a big fan of the Burt's Bee Renewal Refining Cleanser.

"It uses a unique technology that, to my knowledge, is not in any other cleansers on the market," he said. "When the cleanser is applied to the skin, it has a gritty sensation. As you lather it and rub it onto the skin, the gums and starches in it dissolve, which releases the cleansing ingredient or surfactant. It gives a very mild physical exfoliation combined with the cleansing ability."

Up until recently, bakuchiol has only been available in high-priced skincare brands, according to Dr. Zeichner. Burt's Bees products are affordable, natural and well-studied, he said.

"This is a great time for us to have products that we can recommend that will continue to give patients antiaging benefits that they're looking for without creating more irritation," Dr. Zeichner said. "In an environment where people are wearing facemasks on a daily basis, an ingredient like bakuchiol will become a staple ingredient in skincare routines."

REFERENCE:

Dhalwani S, Rybak I, Ellis SR, et al. Prospective, randomized, double-blind assessment of topical bakuchiol and retinol for facial photoaging. *Br J Dermatol*. 2019;180(2):289-296.

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Bakuchiol
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Retinol.

