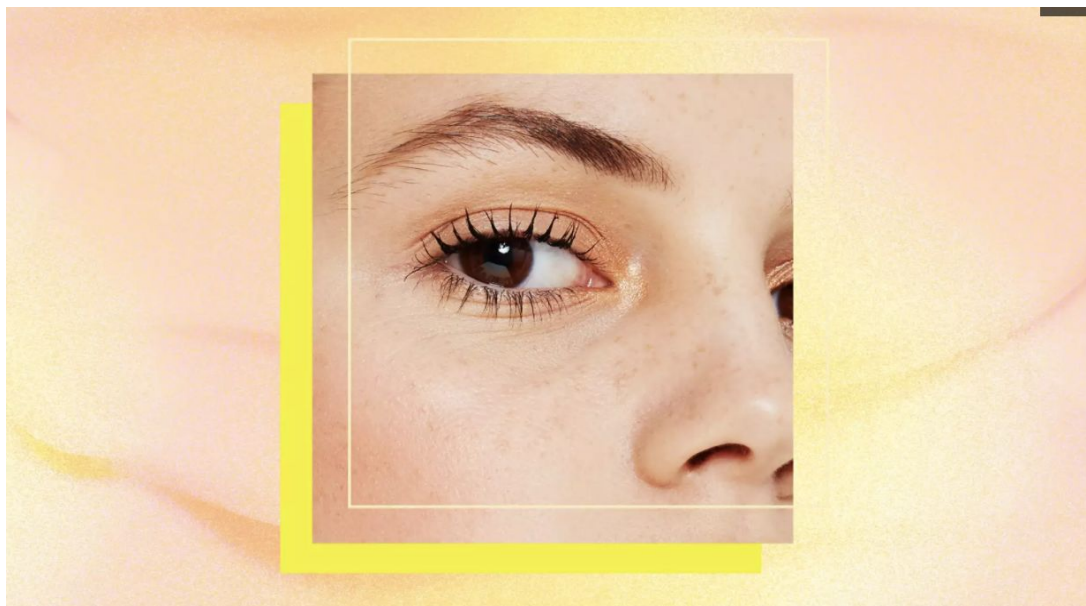


The Best Retinol Eye Creams for Delicate Skin Around the Eyes



If you are familiar with retinol — a derivative of vitamin A that's popularly featured in facial moisturizers and serums — you've probably heard that it can *get. things. done.* for your skin ([including clear acne and help reduce fine lines](#)), but also that it has the potential to be irritating. With these somewhat conflicting messages, you may be wondering if it's a good idea to use the ingredient on the delicate, thin skin around your eyes. (Related: [I Tried Drunk Elephant's Retinol Oil for Beginners — and It's a Godsend for Sensitive Skin](#))

The short answer is yes, it's safe to use retinol under the eyes, and a plethora of retinol eye creams on the market do exist for good reason. Still, there are some best practices you'll want to follow to ensure the best results with minimal irritation, according to [Neda Mehr, M.D., F.A.A.D.](#), a board-certified dermatologist in Newport Beach.

Read on to learn how to use retinol eye cream and to shop some of the best retinol eye cream formulas available now.

Benefits of Using Retinol Under Eyes

The superstar ingredient helps to build up collagen and soften fine lines, among other benefits for the eye area (and everywhere else you use retinol), according to Dr. Mehr.

Retinol works on thickening the middle layer of the skin where collagen is found, aka the dermis, says Dr. Mehr. However, in order to act on the existing collagen in the dermis, retinol has to pass through the top layer of the skin, aka the epidermis.

"Retinols are historically very irritating to the epidermis before they get down to the dermis," says Dr. Mehr. The good news is that there are things you can do to help avoid that irritation whether you're applying retinol to the eyes or anywhere you apply it. (More: [How to Strengthen Your Skin Barrier to Prevent Irritation and Sensitivity](#))

The other main reason someone may want to use retinol on the skin around the eyes is to address those tiny white bumps called [milia](#), adds Dr. Mehr. Milia are tiny, hard bumps made of keratin that are notoriously hard to eliminate. However, [experts recommend](#) using products that help speed up cell turnover to ultimately help get rid of milia, such as [chemical exfoliants](#) and yes, retinol.

How to Use Retinol Under Eyes

The skin around the eyes is the thinnest skin on the entire body, according to Dr. Mehr. "What that means is that the strength [of retinol] that we use on the eyelid is very different from, for example, the strength of a retinol we would use on the back, which is one of the thickest skin of the entire body."

So, it's important to use a product that's specifically formulated to be safe and effective for the eye area, such as a retinol eye cream, says Dr. Mehr. For the eyes, this typically means lower strength retinol.

"Don't use your face retinol on your eye because it's way, way too aggressive, and it'll get dry, flaky, and red." In other words, do not try to multitask your retinol-infused facial cream or facial serum.

When shopping for a retinol eye cream, take your skin concerns and goals into consideration. If you're looking to address fine lines and wrinkles, Dr. Mehr suggests choosing an eye cream that has a thick, moisturizing base. If you're shopping for a retinol eye cream to help with milia, on the other hand, opt for a formula with a water base, she says. If you're looking to address dark circles look for an eye cream that also contains caffeine, she adds.

"Caffeine is what we call a vasoconstrictor, meaning it constricts the blood vessels. And when you constrict the blood vessels, they're not as obvious around the eyes, which leads to less of a dark circle look," explains Dr. Mehr. (More: [Is It Ok to Go Mucus Fishing In Your Eyeballs?](#))

How to Avoid Irritation with a Retinol Eye Cream

As for avoiding skin irritation, there are several practices you can put into place. First, wait 10-15 minutes after cleansing to apply any retinol, which allows your natural oils to come back and protect your epidermis from the ingredient, says Dr. Mehr. You can also moisturize before applying the retinol product to further protect the skin, she adds.

The time of day when you apply retinol eye cream matters, too. Retinol eye creams should be applied at night to prevent UV light from inactivating the ingredient, explains Dr. Mehr. In the morning, sunscreen should be applied to the skin around the eyes to prevent irritation caused by the skin.

Finally, slowly incorporate the retinol eye cream into your routine to see how your skin reacts by using it every other night for the first two weeks, suggests Dr. Mehr. If you're not getting dry, flaky, or itchy, you can increase the use to "as tolerated," she adds. However, you should continue to monitor that you're skin is not getting dry or irritated.

Finally, those that are pregnant or breastfeeding should avoid the ingredient altogether, as well as those with rosacea, eczema, or eyelid dermatitis since these conditions can make the skin more sensitive and less able to tolerate retinol, says Dr. Mehr.

Interested in adding a retinol eye cream, serum, or treatment into your skin-care routine? Consider these best retinol eye cream options below.