



GLOW *All In*

Hyaluronic acid is a little complicated. First, it's not actually an acid. It's a sugar. Also, it's a sponge. Every molecule can hold 1,000 times its weight in water. But one thing about hyaluronic acid has always been 100 percent straightforward: It's a skin-care star. In serums and creams, it smooths and plumps (temporarily); as an injectable, it erases wrinkles (for months). Let's be honest, though: We've taken hyaluronic acid for granted for a while. Sure, it's great stuff, always welcome at the party. But when's the last time you were like, "Guys, hyaluronic acid is here!" That's about to change. A fresh crop of innovations has us taking a new look at the old standby. Chemists and dermatologists are using hyaluronic acid in unprecedented ways to make skin dewier, firmer, and a whole lot awesomer.

The more hyaluronic acid you can get into your skin, the younger and fresher you'll look—and now there are newer, and better, ways to load up.

By Jillian Mackenzie

THE HOT SHOTS

New treatments prove that hyaluronic is way more than a tricky string of vowels.

The Face-lift Lite. “We used to use hyaluronic acid only to fill wrinkles,” says Neil Sadick, a dermatologist in New York City. But now doctors are also injecting it deeper, near fat pads in the face. “Those fat pads hold up the skin but shrink with age, causing sagging and wrinkles,” says Sadick. “By replacing them with a hyaluronic acid filler, you can lift the skin and smooth lines for 9 to 12 months.”

The Bright Side. Something called “skin boosting” is popular in Europe, and now doctors here are adapting the technique. It involves getting shallow injections

of hyaluronic acid—up to 50 shots!—all over your face. If you’re thinking, Why would anyone do that? (fair question), the appeal is twofold. Each treatment disperses hyaluronic acid evenly through the skin so “you look brighter and dewier for weeks,” says Jessica Wu, a dermatologist in Los Angeles. And regular treatments every few months “stimulate collagen to smooth fine lines and firm mild sagging,” says Whitney Bowe, a dermatologist in New York City. Wu expects the popularity of the treatment to rise soon if a hyaluronic acid filler from a company called Teoxane gets FDA approval (the flexible gel is ideal for this technique).

The Superpowered Serum.

Most doctors use needles to get hyaluronic acid into the skin, but some are also just using their hands. They’ll break open a vial of an injectable, like Belotero, then spread it on like a face mask. “It pulls water into the skin for several weeks to a month,” says Robert Anolik, a dermatologist in New York City. “It makes fine lines less visible but won’t do much for deep wrinkles.” It works only if the hyaluronic acid penetrates skin, so dermatologists apply this medical-grade mask for at least three hours after doing another treatment (like microneedling or Fraxel) that pokes microscopic holes in the skin.



From left: Fillerina Lip Plumping Gel, Dr. Dennis Gross Hyaluronic Marine Infusion Modeling Mask, Pestle & Mortar Pure Hyaluronic Serum, Glossier Super Bounce, SkinMedica HA5 Rejuvenating Hydrator, and Neutrogena Hydro Boost Hydrating Serum.

THE HOME GOODS

Hyaluronic acid innovations that don’t require an appointment—or a needle.

Downsizing. The hyaluronic acid in serums and creams used to be too big to sink into skin. But chemists have figured out how to make “small molecules that can penetrate between skin cells to draw in moisture at a deeper level to hydrate better,” says cosmetic chemist Ni’Kita Wilson. We like Pestle & Mortar Pure Hyaluronic Serum and Kane NY Serum Savant.

Making It Last. “There are enzymes that naturally break down hyaluronic acid on the skin’s surface,” says Wilson.

“But cross-linking the molecules gives them more lasting power.” Try SkinMedica HA5 Rejuvenating Hydrator with both cross-linked and miniature hyaluronic acid. The varying shapes and sizes mean that the skin retains its moisture longer, says Ellen Marmur, a dermatologist in New York City.

Plumping It Up. There’s a lot to be said for traditional hyaluronic acid, which sits on the skin and expands to plump wrinkles (typically for three hours, says Wilson). Our favorite old-school hyaluronic acids: Glossier Super Bounce, Neutrogena Hydro Boost

serum, and Michael Todd Beauty Hyaluronic Complex Hydrating Serum.

Getting Creative. You’ve got your creams. You’ve got your serums. And then you’ve got your uncharacterizables. Fillerina Lip Plumping Gel delivers high doses of hyaluronic acid through a rollerball to make lips subtly fuller. And then there’s the science experiment that is the Dr. Dennis Gross Hyaluronic Marine Infusion Modeling Mask. Mix hyaluronic acid gel with powder to get a bright blue mask that turns rubbery on your face. Peel it off after 15 minutes for smoother, more glow-y skin.

—ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY ELIZABETH SIEGEL