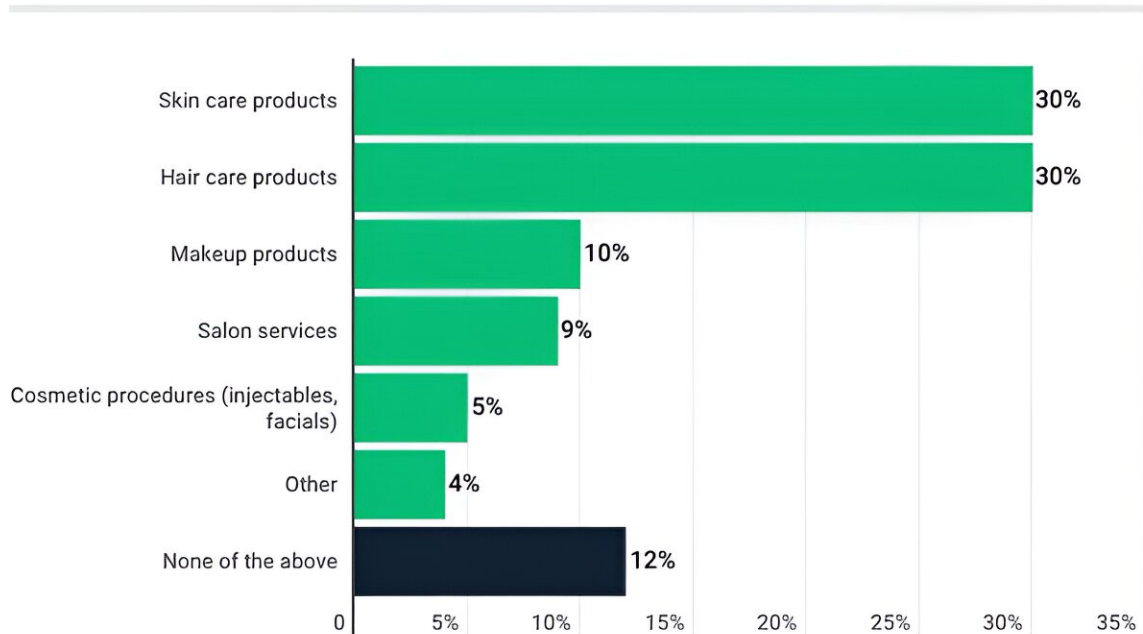


# Is it safe for kids to use adult skincare products?

January 15 2024, by Erin Kayata

Which of the following do you spend the most on annually?



Source: LendingTree survey of 1,949 U.S. consumers, conducted in July 2023.



*Credit: Fueled by Social Media, Gen Zers and Millennials Admit to Overspending on Beauty Products (2024).*

Over the holidays, Drunk Elephant skincare was a wish list mainstay, sending confused parents to beauty stores to puzzle over why their middle schoolers needed so many expensive products.

The reason is [social media](#), which not only popularized the brand, but the idea of creating a skincare regimen. Videos with the hashtag "skincare routine" have over 76.4 billion views on TikTok, and Gen Z and millennials are spending more on skincare than the average American, [according to a study done by LendingTree](#).

Most Americans spend about \$1,754 a year on cosmetics, but younger consumers are spending over \$2,000 annually on hair and makeup.

Not surprisingly, the same study found nearly half of Americans are influenced by social media when it comes to buying [beauty products](#). This is what many parents said led to their younger kids' interest in Drunk Elephant, despite the fact many of these products are meant to reduce fine lines and firm up [skin](#), problems that teens don't really face.

Some might question whether kids should even be using these products. But Northeastern University associate professor of chemistry and chemical biology Leila Deravi said these products, while potentially irritating on young skin, won't cause damage. They also won't deliver on their anti-aging promise for kids or adults, for that matter.

"The thing about skincare, in general, is that a lot of it is marketing," Deravi added. "It's storytelling, it's anecdotal. I believe very strongly that there are certain products that are on the prescription side that do make pretty big differences to collagen production and regeneration of cells. ... But no, you can't get ahead of wrinkle formation."

These regimens, while heavily advertised as offering youthful skin, aren't really doing anything to the skin to prevent aging, which is a

natural process, Deravi said.

Roger Giese, director of the environmental cancer research program and professor of pharmaceutical science at Northeastern University, added that despite the advertising, there's also not a lot known about the [long-term effects](#) of them as it's often difficult to study aging over long periods of time.

"I don't think [clinical studies](#) have been done to really say, 'OK, this really prevents aging,'" Giese said. "It's difficult to get data on aging because it takes so long to see the results."

Outside of a handful of prescription retinols and serums, most of these fancy skincare serums and creams will only moisturize your skin at best, Deravi added.

"I personally don't see any significant issue from the chemistry point of view for having a skincare regimen as early as 8 or 9," she said.

"(A skincare routine) is just a regimen of moisturization. The active ingredients in most anti-aging products are enough to do surface-level activity and provide a scale of really intense hydration to not as intense hydration. ... But at the end of the day, really the most important things are protecting your skin against excessive sun exposure, moisturizing morning and night, and drinking water."

These products might cause unnecessary stress on both the mind and the wallet (particularly for parents who might be shopping for their kids). It can also prompt the kind of acne and irritation users want to ward off. Deravi said teens' and tweens' skin is likely more sensitive to products, which means experimenting with some might cause some irritation.

Another thing to consider is that not every product works for every skin

type. While Drunk Elephant products are all the rage, this line might not work for some people, especially for teens who are experiencing more hormonal changes.

"Everybody has a different biology to their body," Deravi said.

"Nobody's cells are going to react the same way to any sort of experience, whether it's vitamin C or retinols. Everybody is very, very different."

The most significant thing people can do for their skin is wear sunscreen, Deravi said. Too much exposure to UV rays can lead to cellular changes, prompting early signs of aging or worse, skin cancer.

"SPF is probably the most critical thing that you could do to protect against cell damage or wrinkle formation in the long run," Deravi said.

"Because (that damage) can't be reversed once it's done. ... Make sure you're protecting your skin every day with some sort of SPF and that you're being smart about what kind of sunscreens you are using."

**More information:** Study: [www.lendingtree.com/credit-card-study/beauty-spending/](http://www.lendingtree.com/credit-card-study/beauty-spending/)

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