

Social media skin tips debunked

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With an endless feed of influencers, doctors and everyday people giving skincare advice, it can be difficult to separate fact from fiction. Baylor dermatologists break down some of the most prominent social media skincare claims that can be simply ineffective or even dangerous.

"Social media often encourages short, catchy tips rather than comprehensive, personalized advice," said Dr. Zeena Nawas, assistant professor of dermatology at Baylor. "Even if an account is run by a board-certified dermatologist, social media advice can sometimes be overly simplified or generalized. Individual skin needs and conditions vary greatly, and what works for one person might not be suitable for another."

Claim: All adolescents need a product-intensive skincare regimen

With social media accessible to all ages, it is easy to find social media content directed at children and teens that make it seem like an intensive skin regimen is necessary for kids. However, Nawas says using anti-aging products at a young age might be unnecessary and could potentially irritate kids' skin. Younger skin typically does not require advanced treatments, and overuse of certain products can disrupt its natural balance.

Children may benefit from using products formulated for sensitive skin, which are free from harsh chemicals and fragrances, and some children may require products specifically designed to address acne.

A recommended skincare routine is the same as one for most adults—a gentle cleanser to remove dirt and oil followed by a non-comedogenic moisturizer to keep the skin hydrated and finished with a daily use of sunscreen to protect from ultraviolet (UV) damage.

Claim: You can skip sunscreen

Baylor dermatologists stress that skipping sunscreen is not advisable. Sunscreens are defined by whether they have physical or chemical agents

to protect against UV rays, which can lead to skin cancer.

Physical sunscreens, either zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, act as a physical barrier that reflects and scatters UV rays away from the skin, while chemical sunscreens contain carbon-based compounds such as avobenzone, oxybenzone, octocrylene, octinoxate and others to absorb UV rays and convert them into heat, which is then released from the skin.

Some patients may have sensitive skin that could be agitated by certain sunscreens or reservations about the effects of chemical sunscreen on the skin; however, Nawas says visiting a board-certified dermatologist will help patients find the right sunscreen and answer questions patients may have about sunscreens.

Claim: Darker skin means no sunburn

While melanin, the pigment that gives skin its color, provides some natural protection against harmful rays, it is not a complete barrier against UV damage. Nawas says populations with darker skin can and do get sunburned, though it may take longer exposure to the sun compared to those with lighter skin. Although sunburn on darker skin might not always be as visibly red, a person will still experience pain and peeling. If left unprotected, people with darker skin will still experience premature aging, sunburn and an increased risk of skin cancer.

Claim: Toothpaste clears up acne

It is suggested that toothpaste can dry up pimples and other acne spots and make them disappear; however, it is not a recommended or effective treatment. Different toothpastes contain different types of ingredients that can irritate the skin, cause dryness and potentially make acne worse.

Nawas recommends sticking to over-the-counter treatments that contain acne-fighting ingredients such as benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid that are safer and more effective.

Claim: Hair loss can be stopped or restored with different naturally occurring oils

Hair loss can be caused by numerous diseases, which is why it is important to see a dermatologist to uncover what it may be. Nawas says there is anecdotal support that some oils can help with hair health, but there's limited scientific evidence backing their effectiveness for significant hair regrowth.

"In one study, rosemary oil was shown to be effective in promoting hair growth after six months of use, and there are studies showing coconut oil can improve brittle hair, but there is limited evidence regarding its impact on hair growth," says Nawas.

"There is weaker evidence for castor oil improving hair quality by increasing hair luster, and no strong evidence supporting its use for hair growth. Argan oil, or Moroccan oil, also does not have any significant evidence to improve [hair growth](#) or quality."

These oils might help with overall scalp health but are not substitutes for proven treatments prescribed by dermatologists.

Hair loss treatment is dictated by the type of hair loss. For the most common type of hair loss, pattern alopecia, or androgenetic alopecia, minoxidil is an over-the-counter topical treatment approved by the FDA for hair regrowth for both men and women. Platelet-rich-plasma can also be performed by dermatologists, which can help in certain [hair-loss](#) diseases. Hair transplants are a surgical option for more permanent

results.

"Eating a balanced diet rich in vitamins and minerals is essential for hair health," said Dr. Oyetewa Oyerinde, assistant professor of dermatology and director of the Skin of Color Clinic at Baylor.

"Practicing stress-reducing activities such as meditation and regular physical activity, as well as getting enough sleep are all important for a healthy scalp. Other important points are avoiding tight hairstyles, and harsh chemicals and treatments that can damage the hair and minimizing the use of heat styling tools like blow dryers, curling irons and straighteners."

Claim: Botox now means younger looking skin later

Botox is a type of neuromodulator that can prevent the formation of wrinkles that form from facial movements by temporarily paralyzing the muscles responsible for these movements. Starting Botox in your 20s might be a preventive measure to reduce the appearance of fine lines later in life; however, it's important to consider the cost, potential side effects and the fact that it's not a permanent solution.

Regular injections will be needed, and the long-term effects of early use are still being studied. Other non-cosmetic uses for Botox can be to treat medical conditions such as chronic migraines or excessive sweating.

"Social media trends are endless. The key to healthy skin is consistency, simplicity and working with a dermatologist who can provide expert advice that is specific for your skin needs," Nawas said.

"Social media provides immediate access to information and often features visually engaging content. People are drawn to it because it offers convenience and relatability," Oyerinde said. "Navigating social

media advice with a critical eye and a focus on evidence-based practices will help you make better-informed decisions about your skin, nail and [hair](#) care. Visiting a dermatologist will allow for a proper consultation for [skin](#) conditions."

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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