

THE NEW BEAUTY BASIC

High concentrations of active ingredients make serums a smart addition to your skincare arsenal.

BY HELEN VONG

MEANT TO BE APPLIED UNDER YOUR MOISTURIZER, SERUMS

are highly concentrated, water-based solutions (some contain a bit of oil) that rapidly penetrate skin to deliver specific active ingredients that target every skin concern. "Serums boast about 10 times the amount of active substances than cream moisturizers," says Dr. Martie Gidon, MD, FRCPC, of Toronto. "There are serums for hydrating (hyaluronic acid), anti-aging (retinol), acne (salicylic acid), and antioxidants for pigmentation (vitamins C and E, ferulic acid, Coffeeberry)."

The permeability of serums enables quick absorption of targeted substances into the skin, making them "the most potent products in a

skincare line", says Toronto-based dermatologist Dr. Jensen Yeung, MD, FRCPC. But serums are not meant to replace moisturizers. Instead, "they work synergistically with moisturizers, like sunscreens as "photoprotectors" against free-radical damage caused by sunlight, pollution and smoking," says Yeung.

CAN YOU SKIP THE TONER?

It's a hotly debated topic among experts. "Unfortunately no," says Dr. Gidon, who explains that a toner's ▶

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—DR. MARTIE GIDON, MD, FRCPC

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B. Kamins Diamond-Radiance Deep Wrinkle Concentrate

240 for \$15 mL. bkamins.com

FOR: minimizing deep-set creases around eyes, mouth and forehead.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS: Vitamin A and C, peptides, and hyaluronic acid.



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ENHANCE BEAUTY

purpose is to balance pH levels after cleansing and remove residue from makeup. Gidon suggests investing in both a toner and a serum. "Think of a 1-2-3-4 approach: cleanse, tone, repair/prevent and moisturize."

However, with the improvement in skin care ingredients over the years, many cleansers on the market now leave little to no residue after use, which is one reason why experts on the other side of the fence say most people can mix this step. "Toners benefit people with skin that is oily, acne prone or lacks lustre. But if a person has very dry or sensitive skin (or perhaps suffer from dermatitis) a toner is not required and may cause irritation," says Hamilton-based dermatologist Dr. Peter Vigrjevic, MD, FRCPC. So if you don't have problematic skin, what should you spring for? "I believe if it's a choice of a lower quality serum along with a toner, versus a high-quality serum, you're getting more 'bang for your buck' with the high quality serum," Dr. Vigrjevic says.

SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic

\$135 for 30 mL,
skinceuticals.com

FOR: reducing appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. Ideal for dry to combination skin, and for post-procedure use.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS: vitamin C (15 per cent), vitamin E, and ferulic acid

SkinCeuticals Phloretin CF

\$152 for 30 mL,
skinceuticals.com

FOR: hyperpigmentation and restoring radiance or elasticity to patchy or sagging skin. Ideal for oily skin types.

ACTIVE INGREDIENTS: Phloretin, vitamin C (10 per cent), ferulic acid

