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NORDIC BEAUTY BUZZ | GOING GRAY: THE QUARANTINE EFFECT
THE FUTURE OF FAT TRANSFER | THE RETURN OF JENNA LYONS

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Venus Williams serves
her next venture: that
of a skin-care line.

**“I’m fortunate to
have good genes.
I think a lot of times,
it comes down to that
and how you take
care of yourself.”**

“I have tons of makeup—more
than I need—but I have a very
‘less is more’ approach.”

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a behind-the-scenes look.

Shift

In the United States, nearly 6,000 women enter menopause every day. Our hormones are constantly in flux—especially as we age—experiencing a roller-coaster ride of highs and lows that impact not only our minds and bodies, but also our skin.

by **Brittany Burhop Fallon**

Menopause

The Hormone Equation

Though there are more than 50 hormones in the body, hormonal effects on the skin can be linked specifically to estrogen, progesterone and testosterone. “Estrogen ensures the functionality of our reproductive organs and preserves bone mass and the elasticity and moisture content of the skin,” explains Newport Beach, CA endocrinologist Jane L. Frederick, MD. Scientific studies have demonstrated a clear relationship between estrogen levels and the age women appear due to their overall skin health, says

Newport Beach, CA dermatologist Zenovia Gabriel, MD. Progesterone functions as the supporting actor, but is a crucial figure: “Progesterone is a precursor of many other hormones, and therefore also has a global impact on the body’s various physiologic systems, but estrogen is the key player in maintaining youthful, healthy skin,” says Bloomfield Hills, MI dermatologist Linda C. Honet, MD. “It is the fine balance of estrogen and progesterone in relation to each other and other hormones, that help keep skin healthy.” Testosterone plays a skin-care role too, as it stimulates sebum (oil) production and can trigger acne or dryness as hormone levels change.

MAKSIM GLADKI/EYEM/GETTY IMAGES



↓ Skin Shift

Dr. Honet tells her patients that every decade presents “a new you in a new skin,” in the sense that a woman’s hormones are in constant physiologic fluctuation. Some of the most marked ebbs and flows occur before, during and after menopause, including **these three common changes.**

ISSUE 01

Acne Can Increase

It appears as though more middle-aged women are experiencing acne than ever before. Though some of this perception is attributed to social media sharing, Dr. Zenovia says the patterns of female life are also different than they were 50 years ago. “Women are using oral contraceptives for decades now, and this may impact the hormone receptors on the tissue and the hormonal changes we experience.”

When breakouts manifest later in life, New York dermatologist Doris Day, MD says they’re typically seen along the chin and jawline, and most often during perimenopause (the winding down of a woman’s biological clock in her 40s when her menstrual cycle starts to change). “If this happens, you shouldn’t dry out your skin like you did as a teenager—that’s too irritating for someone with mature skin,” adds Dr. Zenovia. “You still need tried-and-true ingredients like benzoyl peroxide, but they should be mixed with emollients and antioxidants that will also nourish the skin.”

Dr. Honet says prescription retinoids like tazarotene and adapalene can help when over-the-counter topicals aren’t enough. “The key is to start low and slow, moisturize regularly and be patient with your skin.”

What Are Phytoestrogens?

Natural compounds found in some plants and plant-based foods, phytoestrogens have a chemical structure that is similar to the human estrogen molecule, but not identical. “Facial skin contains a very high density of estrogen receptors, and scientific data proves that phytoestrogens can bind to these receptors and initiate important signal pathways in the skin,” Dr. Zenovia explains. “Phytoestrogens basically mimic the effect of human estrogen on the skin, without systemic effects.”

Duxbury, MA plastic surgeon Christine Hamori, MD says two phytoestrogens in particular—daidzein and genistein—have been shown to improve skin elasticity and reduce wrinkle depth. “When taking orally as supplements or consumed in foods like soybeans, the production of hyaluronic acid, collagen and extracellular protein matrix is increased,” she adds.

The average age for a woman to enter menopause is 51.

ISSUE 02

Collagen Dwindles

Research shows we can lose up to 30 percent of our collagen Types 1 and 3 in the first five years after menopause, which can cause skin to appear less firm and taut. “Once a woman enters menopause—the average age in the U.S. is 51—her ovaries stop producing estrogen completely, but a precursor to estrogen, dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA) secreted by the adrenal gland, continues to supply the body with some estrogen,” says Dr. Hamori. “Studies reveal that skin thickness decreases 1 percent per year and collagen content decreases 2 percent per year.”

To stimulate collagen production, opt for skin-care products containing retinoids, peptides, phytoestrogens, vitamin C, and/or growth factors, as well as in-office treatments such as fractionated lasers, dermal fillers and microneedling.

ISSUE 03

Hydration Levels Drop

Along with the loss of collagen comes a reduction in hyaluronic acid, which affects the skin’s ability to produce and retain moisture. “The drop in estrogen during perimenopause and menopause causes transepidermal water loss, leading to dehydration,” Dr. Hamori says. “As a result, skin feels drier and rougher, and appears more wrinkled.”

Dr. Day says our oil-producing glands get some of the blame, too. “As we age, these sebaceous glands diminish or become less active and skin gets drier.” To replenish moisture, look for products with ceramides, humectants such as lactic acid, hyaluronic acid and glycerin, and phytoestrogens.

The Kit

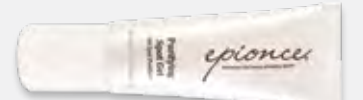
From blemishes to dullness, **these five topicals (and one tool) address hormonal shifts** at the skin level.



Dr. Zenovia Hormonal Dermatology Advanced Retinol Night Repair Treatment gives skin the phytoestrogen and antioxidant support needed for repair—it also reduces the appearance of acne scars. \$72, sephora.com



Emepelle Serum contains nonhormonal MEP Technology that revitalizes perimenopausal and menopausal skin lacking estrogen for a major radiance reboot. \$175, emepelle.com



The botanical blend of sulfur, spearmint oil and paprika in **Epionce Purifying Spot Gel** stops blemishes from getting worse and prevents new ones from forming, all without drying out the skin. \$40, dermstore.com



When hormonal downswings cause elastic fibers to weaken, **Korres Meno-Reverse White Pine Up-Lift Sculptor** helps temporarily firm the cheeks, jawline and neck for a more defined look. \$78, korres.com



Seven phytoestrogen extracts give this intensely nourishing **Me-NO-Pause Moisture Cream** its restorative powers that improve skin elasticity, hydration and other signs of aging over time. \$25, indeedlabs.com



Not your average gua sha stone, the stainless steel **Pause Well-Aging Fascia Stimulating Tool** is designed to stimulate collagen-producing cells in the skin to enhance tone and elasticity. \$115, pausewellaging.com