



## Insider secrets for natural beauty

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**Q |** No matter what I do, my lips don't seem to hold moisture. They're always dry and cracked, and although they don't bleed, they can become sore unless I lick them often. I've tried everything from over-the-counter to special oils from South America. What can I do?

- Nika, Edmonton, Alberta

**A |** Dear Nika,

I would refrain from licking your lips even if it seems that doing so relieves the soreness. Licking them will only further dehydrate the lips causing them to chap and crack. Ensure that you are taking in enough water throughout the day to keep your body hydrated. I would suggest applying vitamin E or grapeseed oil to your lips to promote healing as well as lock in moisture.

You mentioned oils from South America, but if you haven't already done so, I would suggest trying a lip balm with babassu oil. Diet-wise, I would suggest you consume foods rich in vitamins A, B, C, D and E and add fish to your diet such as wild salmon which contains omega-3 fatty acids. Remove all traces of lipstick before bed, especially long-lasting lipsticks that tend to dry the lips. Go ahead and add some extra pampering for your lips to your skin-care routine such as a gentle exfoliant once or twice a week followed by a hydrating masque.

**Q |** How important is cleanser? What should I consider when it comes to ingredients?

- Joanna, Quebec City, Quebec

**A |** Dear Joanna,

I would have to say that cleanser is essential to any skin-care regimen. If the skin is not effectively cleansed, it would accumulate pollution, sweat, debris and bacteria as well as excess oil. A well-balanced clean face also aids in the absorption of the other products applied in your daily skin-care routine.

Ordinary soaps have the tendency to disrupt your skin's natural pH as it does the job of cleaning your skin but at the same time taking out the lipid. On the other hand, if you use a natural, or preferably organic, cleanser specific to your skin type, it would only take a small amount of the natural lipids in your skin so that you will still maintain the natural oil that your face needs. Read the labels on soap as well as cleansers that market themselves as natural yet contain other chemicals that are not necessary to clean your face. Limit products that contain sodium lauryl sulfate, used in car washes, garage floor cleanser and engine degreasers, and found in 90 percent of skin-care products that foam. Other ingredients to look out for are fragrance, pigments, dyes and parabens as they may cause skin problems. Usually, if you can't pronounce the ingredient list don't use it. ☀



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