

VITAMIN F

- **Type of ingredient:** Vitamin, fatty acid
- **Main benefits:** Hydrates, replenishes, is high in antioxidants, is anti-inflammatory, restores the skin's barrier.
- **Who should use it:** In general, all skin types would benefit from vitamin F usage, but especially those with acneic skin.
- **How often can you use it?:** Vitamin F is safe to use twice a day, morning and night.
- **Works well with:** Hydrators, linoleic acid, anti-aging products, and SPF products.
- **Don't use with:** In general, vitamin F can be used with all ingredients safely.

What Is Vitamin F?

Vitamin F would seem to be, well, a vitamin—but it's actually not, at least not by standard definition. It more accurately fits the description of a fat, essential fatty acid, or lipid. "[Vitamin F] is a term that refers to the combination of two essential fatty acids: linoleic acid (LA) and linolenic acid (ALA) which offer a wealth of health benefits such as reduced inflammation, improved cardiac health, mental health support, and controlled blood sugar" says Gonzalez.

Vitamin F can be sourced in a multitude of food choices, such as almonds, chia seeds, hemp seeds, and egg yolks, and can also be found in a handful of essential oils such as rosehip, chia, and argan. These days, though, it can be slathered on the skin via creams, oils, and potions laden with the ingredient. "Until now, the usual source of Vitamin F was our diet, until skincare came to the rescue—and topical Vitamin F has become a novel and exciting source of it," says Gonzalez.

Benefits of Vitamin F for Skin

- **Retains moisture:** Considered an omega-6 essential fatty acid, vitamin F is a hydrating ingredient that also protects the skin's barrier and retains moisture.²
- **Reduces inflammation:** Vitamin F may be exceptionally beneficial for those with inflammatory skin issues, such as dermatitis and psoriasis: "[Vitamin F] helps reduce inflammation as well as regulate healthy cell function, and excessive water loss," says Petrillo.
- **Combats acne:** A 1998 study found that those who experience acne were able to reduce the pustule size by 25% in as little as one month by applying linoleic acid topically.³
- **Protects skin from UV rays:** One of the important benefits of Vitamin F is its ability to convert into compounds which exhibit inflammatory and immune properties that

may alter the cellular response of our skin towards ultraviolet light, notes Petrillo. "This essentially means it can help minimize inflammation and boost recovery from environmental exposure which damage healthy skin cells, and provide an added layer of systemic photo-protection, for those days you forget to apply sunscreen," he says.

- **Fights psoriasis:** "[Vitamin F] is best for patients with highly sensitive skin and conditions such as atopic dermatitis, psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis, rosacea, and acne prone individuals," says Chimento.
- **Blocks irritants:** Vitamin F is also known as linoleic acid, an essential fatty acid used to make ceramides which help to build the outermost layer of the skin.⁴ "They provide the 'cement' to keep the cells together to block out irritants, infection UV light, pollutants and exhibit anti-inflammatory properties," explains Chimento.
- **Provides a youthful glow:** In general, says Gonzalez, anyone looking for healthier and younger-looking complexion can benefit from frequent use of fatty acids like Vitamin F, "in order to avoid dryness, rough texture, irritation, allergies, inflammation, and other signs of aging."
- **Calms compromised skin:** Gonzalez notes that Vitamin F is "phenomenal" for those with chronic skin conditions "characterized by a compromised skin barrier function," as it calms inflammation and soothes troubled skin.

Side Effects of Vitamin F

Vitamin F has no known side effects—provided you use it as directed. "It can be used morning or night," says Chimento, "however, if the product contains a retinol or vitamin A component, it is best to use at bedtime." That's because retinol and vitamin A products may cause redness or drying. So exercise caution.

How to Use It

Vitamin F can be found in various forms and is incorporated in many different skincare products. From serums to oils to creams, vitamin F is a valuable ingredient that many brands are utilizing. The proper way to use it varies depending on the product, but the pure form of the oil can be used both morning and night as part of your daily routine. As a general rule of thumb, it's best to start slow. "As a topical, it can be used one to two times per day," says Petrillo. "But it is best to start off with once per day to see how your skin reacts to it before increasing frequency."

Alternately, you can create your own mask by mixing vitamin F into a mild face cream or serum. "Add the oil directly to the portion you will be adding to your skin—not to the entire jar or bottle as you can disrupt the concentrations of the ingredients in your product and potentially decrease the half life," says Petrillo. "Make sure to leave the mask on long enough to allow the ingredients to penetrate the skin."

Vitamin F is not an actual vitamin. Rather, it is a vitamin complex that contains two essential fatty acids named alpha-linolenic acid (ALA) and linoleic acid (LA). Both of them come under polyunsaturated fatty acids. Alpha-linolenic acid belongs to the omega 3 family while linoleic acid is an omega 6 fatty acid. [1]

The combination of these two fatty acids regulates healthy body functions and plays a major role in promoting [glowing skin](#). The complex vitamin was discovered in the year 1920. [2] However, your body does not produce any of these fatty acids naturally, and both need to be obtained from your regular diet.

What Does Vitamin F Do For The Skin?

1. Maintains Moisture Balance

Vitamin F is known for its hydrating properties. Being an omega 6 essential fatty acid, it works by retaining the moisture in your skin and maintaining your natural moisture level. [3]

2. Fights Against Acne

A study conducted in 1998 evaluated the topical application of Vitamin F on people with acne. The result showed that the [pustules](#) were reduced by 25% after one month of application.[4]

3. Anti-Inflammatory

Having anti-inflammatory properties, Vitamin F is exceptionally beneficial for people with acne-prone skin or to those who have [skin inflammation](#) issues.

4. Controls Psoriasis

While Vitamin F suits all [skin types](#), it works best for people with [sensitive skin](#). Skin conditions like psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis and acne can be controlled to a certain extent by using Vitamin F.

5. Blocks UV Rays

Vitamin F is anti-inflammatory and also holds some immune properties. When your skin comes in contact with sunlight, Vitamin F tries to alter the reaction. So,

if you have not worn your sunscreen for a day but have applied topical Vitamin F, your skin is safe for a while.

6. Protects The Skin Barrier

Linoleic acid of Vitamin F helps build the outermost layer of your skin. This layer protects you from the outside pathogens, bacteria, germs, UV light etc. The topical application of Vitamin F strengthens your skin's protective barrier.

7. Adds Glow To Your Skin

Since it hydrates your skin, it reduces dryness. It makes your [dull skin](#) moisturized and charismatic. Your skin starts naturally glowing after a few days of applying Vitamin F.

Journal ;<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/jocd.13616>