



REFINERY29

These Serums Actually Work, According To Top Dermatologists

Sure, a new pair of shoes or an It bag is nice, but many of us are more willing to shell out a chunk of our paychecks for quality skin care, all in the name of #iwokeuplikethis status. That said, there are a myriad of things in the way of finding a complexion potion that'll actually lead you on a path to improving your biggest skin-care issues. Namely, lots of confusing marketing jargon, and campaigns that promise flawless complexions, but don't always deliver.

The pattern seems to go like this: The more effective a product claims to be, the more dollar signs are involved. Serums are some of the most spendy, since time and time again they prove to be the most important part of your routine, as they oft pack the most active ingredient and go on first, allowing them to soak in and do the most good.

Naturally, it takes a lot of sussing out to figure out which serums are worth the splurge. To cut through the BS, we consulted top dermatologists for direct recommendations. These serums get the clinical green light, and while their campaigns and packaging might be less sexy than your pretty vials or countless bottles of fancy face oil, we have to ask: What's fancier than a flawless face? That's kind of the whole point, anyway.

Ahead, the serums that top dermatologists call the most effective — and recommend to their own patients — all organized by skin-care concern.



Skin Concern: Uneven Pigmentation and/or Dullness

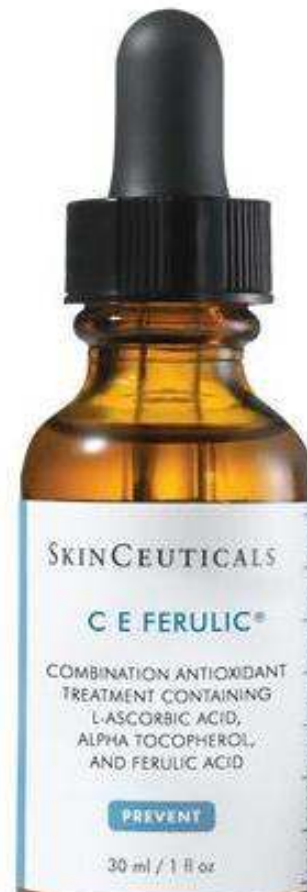
[Dr. Paul Jarrod Frank](#), a cosmetic dermatologist, touts resveratrol and vitamin C as your best weapons against pigmentation issues, mainly uneven texture or dullness in skin.

“Resveratrol is the strongest natural antioxidant that reduces [uneven] pigmentation and protects the skin from further free radical damage,” Dr. Frank explains. He couples that with a disclaimer that, “there’s no magic ingredient to make [uneven pigmentation] disappear quickly, as the body continues to make the enzyme that

This SkinCeuticals serum gets a thumbs-up from a handful of the derms we spoke with, including Dr. Engelman, Dr. Frank, and Dr. Elizabeth Tanzi. Pigmentation can come from lifestyle habits like too much sun exposure, smoking, picking at your blemishes, and even genetic predispositions. But the L-ascorbic acid (a highly effective form of vitamin C) is not only great for brightening, it also “contains powerful antioxidants that fight and reverse damage from free radicals that wreck your skin cells,” Dr. Engelman concludes.

Dr. Elizabeth Tanzi, founder and director of [Capital Laser & Skin Care](#) and assistant clinical professor, department of dermatology, at the George Washington University Medical Center, cautions against reaching for a one-serum-fits-all product. “Serums are best used for targeted problems,” she notes. It’s best to look for stable packaging, as many serums contain antioxidants that are light sensitive. (This

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“Not all vitamin C serums are equal or effective,” Dr. Frank chimes in. “The addition of the ferulic acid in this product helps to stabilize the efficacy of the vitamin C.”