

## Wrinkle remedies <sup>[1]</sup>

Dear Alice,

I am twenty-five years old yet have been noticing a lot of wrinkles around my eyes. I have started to use baby oil as an intense moisturizer-- is this a good idea? Do you have any other suggestions for over-the-counter wrinkle remedies?

### Answer

Dear Reader,

Before you purchase every anti-wrinkle product on the shelf, it is important to consider the different causes of wrinkles. As people age, their skin produces less oil and the epidermis (outer skin layer) becomes dry. Collagen and elastin, proteins that help keep skin taut, begin to diminish in the underlying dermis. The skin then begins to sag, causing a wrinkled appearance. While this is something that happens to everyone, the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) <sup>[2]</sup> points to sun exposure and smoking as prime contributors to speeding up this process. One's propensity to wrinkle is also genetic.

While there are many over-the-counter remedies that claim to reduce wrinkles, they can be costly and the results are often short-term. So far, there's no cream that can *eliminate* wrinkles, but you can do certain things to minimize or prevent further skin damage that can cause wrinkles and to improve the overall appearance of your skin.

- **Moisturize, moisturize, moisturize:** Rich, emollient moisturizers help hydrate skin and "plump-up" fine lines with regular use. For those concerned about oil and clogged pores, oil-free lotions and creams are available over-the-counter; they can help reduce dryness that may lead to fine lines. With any new moisturizer, use caution when applying it to the area around your eye, as this region tends to be quite sensitive. Also, to avoid irritating your eyes, don't moisturize too close to them.
- **Seek sun protection factor 15:** According to the AAD, using a moisturizer with at least SPF 15 is a good way to limit harm to the skin from sun exposure. For more information, you can check out Shining light on sun protection products <sup>[3]</sup> in the General Health archive.
- **Be careful when using alpha-hydroxy acids or retinol:** Although moisturizers containing alpha-hydroxy acids and retinol (derived from vitamin A) treatments could help diminish the appearance of fine lines, they can be irritating to the delicate skin around the eyes.

- **Consider the air in your bedroom and office:** If you're surrounded by dry and/or heated air, using a humidifier while you sleep or work can help preserve some of your skin's moisture.
- **Think about allergies:** Another consideration in choosing a moisturizer is whether or not it is hypoallergenic, which means that its ingredients are not likely to cause an allergic reaction.

You mentioned that you have used baby oil. While there's probably no harm in using baby oil as a moisturizer, it does not contain sunscreen. The moisturizing ingredients in a common lotion are similar to the ingredients in standard baby oil, putting them about equal for relieving or preventing dryness. However, baby oil is a heavy, greasy substance that's more suitable for the hands and body than for the face.

In addition to over-the-counter remedies, some medical treatments for wrinkles are available; however, they may not produce permanent results, can be quite costly, and are generally not covered by insurance, as they're considered cosmetic. A dermatologist can prescribe tretinoin or retinoic acid (also known by the brand name, Renova), which has been shown to diminish fine facial wrinkles in some people. There are also chemical peels, collagen or botulinum toxin injections, dermabrasion, laser resurfacing, and plastic surgery, just to name a few procedures.

You might also want to re-think your "wrinkles": Could your "wrinkles" actually be fine lines caused by dry, winter weather? Are you using a foundation around your eyes that can cake and cause a creased appearance that may be mistaken for wrinkles? Were you badly sunburned as a child, which could lead to premature wrinkling? Do you often squint your eyes?

Another thing to keep in mind is that Western cultures are very youth-oriented and prejudiced against aging. We're bombarded with images of young, airbrushed men and women on television, in magazines, on billboards — just about everywhere in the media. With few positive images of people with less-than-perfect skin, it's easy to forget that wrinkles are a normal fact of life and a natural part of the skin's aging process. Some cultures even consider them to be beautiful and a symbol of wisdom.

To find the best skin care routine for your skin type, speak with a dermatologist, who can determine the cause and appropriate treatment for you.

Alice!

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[Skin Conditions](#) <sup>[5]</sup>

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