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Madonna's Dermatologist Swears By This \$150 Hyaluronic Acid Serum

As far as [skincare acids](#) and [buzzworthy ingredients](#) go, hyaluronic acid (aka HA) is at the top of the leaderboard. Unlike other more aggressive acids like AHAs and BHAs, it plays nicely with all skin types, can be mixed and matched easily with favorite formulas and regimens, and does a whole lot of good for [a parched complexion](#). In fact, it's probably the most recommended ingredient and product type we hear touted time and time again from [celebrity dermatologists and estheticians](#).

Essentially, the ingredient (and serums and other skincare products housing it) helps attract water to aid in skin hydration and to also help stimulate collagen production—two things that naturally wane as we get older. So, some high-quality supplementation is key. To get all of our HA facts in order, we reached out to a handful of the most sought-after skin experts in the industry (aka the board-certified dermatologists celebrities and other skin-obsessed peeps flock to) to get a better understanding of what HA is, how we should shop for it to ensure we're getting a dependable formula, and the exact hyaluronic acid serums they actually love and recommend. Keep scrolling!

What Hyaluronic Acid Is

According to [board-certified dermatologist Sheel Desai Solomon, MD, of Preston Dermatology + Skin Surgery](#), hyaluronic acid is a technically a protein called glycosaminoglycan that is naturally found in our skin, eyes, connective tissue, and joints.

"Think of hyaluronic acid as a powerful hydrator," she explains. "It has an amazing ability to attract and hold water in the skin and anywhere else in the body where it's found. It lubricates the joints and helps to repair damage to the body after an injury."

However, as we age, our body's natural hydration stores can start to decrease, which is where supplementing with a high-quality hyaluronic acid serum or skincare formula can come in clutch.

"As we age, our skin becomes increasingly dry and loses moisture," adds [Gretchen Frieling](#), MD, a board-certified dermatologist near Boston. "Aging skin loses its firmness, becomes less supple and often looks dehydrated. A product containing hyaluronic acid can replenish the moisture that aging skin is lacking and improve the appearance of fine lines and make the skin look smoother."

What You Should Look for When Serum Shopping

Since hyaluronic acid is a big molecule, it doesn't always penetrate down to the dermis, but it can definitely help improve hydration levels where the skin needs it, explains [Paul Jarrod Frank](#), MD, celebrity cosmetic dermatologist and founder of PFRANKMD. However, that's why it's important to look for serums containing two different molecular weights of hyaluronic acid and/or serums formulated with ingredients that help seal in moisture and prevent trans-epidermal water loss.

To ensure you're getting the most from a hyaluronic acid serum, Solomon recommends looking closely at a product's ingredient list as you shop. "Some formulations claim that they contain hyaluronic acid even though the amount is very small," she warns. "Look for the ingredient 'sodium hyaluronate' early in the ingredient list—since hyaluronic acid is a big molecule, and if not formulated well, it may just sit on the skin's surface." Plus as Frank mentioned, look for helpful ingredient additions like ceramides, peptides, niacinamide, or other antioxidants which will only enhance the benefits of hyaluronic acid formulations.



"This hyaluronic acid serum is comfortable and soothing," explains Frank. "It also protects the skin from blue light (like what emanates from your phone and computer screens) in addition to pollution."

As Madonna's go-to dermatologist, Frank also helped develop the formulas from her cult-loved skincare line MDNA Skin. He tells us this spendy (but worth it) serum boasts three unique forms of hyaluronic acid and plays host to a luxe cocktail of powerful hydrators that can attract and retain up to 1000 times their molecular weight in water—even, he says, under conditions of extreme dryness. The secret? A mineral-rich blend of skin-balance thermal waters that come from the legendary town of Montecatini, Italy.

"This hyaluronic acid serum is packed with powerful vitamin C to provide hydration and antioxidants to help repair free radicals created from sun and environmental damage," shares celebrity dermatologist [Naissan O. Wesley](#), MD, FACMS. "It is housed in tiny glass ampules to preserve its freshness and does not require preservatives as additional ingredients."

According to Wesley, this soothing hyaluronic acid serum is specifically formulated to be extra gentle, making it a great option for those with sensitive skin. Plus, she tells us it won't clog pores and is free of colorants and fragrance. "In a clinical study of 50 patients, 100% agreed it helped improve skin resiliency and suppleness and helped skin feel softer and smoother," she adds.

Wesley is also a big fan of this cult-favorite from SkinCeuticals "This is a classic product that contains both hyaluronic acid and vitamin B5 to not only hydrate but also improve the skin's barrier. It's lightweight, doesn't clog pores, and is tolerated by even those with sensitive skin."



This lightweight, jelly-like hyaluronic acid serum features two different molecular weights of hyaluronic acid," [Howard Sobel](#), MD, of Sobel Skin in New York City, explains. "The bigger hyaluronic acid molecule stays closer to the surface of the skin for an instant plumping effect, while the smaller hyaluronic acid molecule penetrates deeper into the dermis for a longer-lasting effect."

He's also a fan of another comparably affordable pick from Neutrogena, and tell us that in addition to the starring ingredient, hyaluronic acid, this serum strategically contains vitamin B5, which acts as a humectant to help retain the skin's moisture levels. Not to mention it has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, which can help soothe sensitive skin.

"This soothing serum also contains two different molecular weights of hyaluronic acids to provide both instant and long-term hydrating benefits," adds Sobel. "In addition, this serum helps firm the skin with brown algae extracts while the soothing spring water (which contains trace minerals and amino acids, sugars, and lipopolysaccharides from microflora), making it ideal for sensitive skin."

Alongside ingredient power players like hyaluronic acid and vitamin B5 (which both draw moisture into the skin), Sobel recommends this serum due to its high ratio of ceramides, which enhance and restore the skin's natural barrier. Slightly richer than some other hyaluronic acid serums, he says you can opt to wear it on its own or underneath your favorite moisturizer.

I hate to sound cliché, but this new superfood-infused formula from Volition is truly like a detoxifying drink of moisture for your skin. It boasts a triple threat roster of celery seed, hyaluronic acid, and peptides. I also love that it's oil-free so it won't upset my quick-to-clog pores and acne-prone skin.

I feel like I tell you every week how much of a [self-tanning fiend](#) I am, so here's my current obsession for healthy, hydrated, and radiant skin. Not only does this brand-new face serum from this natural, vegan, and cruelty-free tanning brand contain hyaluronic acid, it's also filled with other skin-improving fares like raspberry seed oil and cocoa seed extract. Depending on how dark you want your tan to be, just apply two to 12 drops to your face, neck, and chest daily before following up with a moisturizer. So easy.

If you're looking for a hyaluronic acid serum that's affordable and effective, I always recommend this fan favorite from The Ordinary. It's strategically anchored by brightening and hydrating vitamin B5, and my [71-year-old beauty-loving mom](#) is also a fan.

I also love this handy booster from Versed. Not only is it a saving grace for my bank account, but it's also easy to travel with and customize since you can add a few drops into any and all of your favorite skincare formulas or even your foundation. Plus, how cute is the packaging?

If you can stomach a steeper price tag, I honestly believe this is the best hyaluronic acid-infused product on the market. I've tried so many formulas, and I love how easily and quickly it absorbs into my skin. In addition to hyaluronic acid, it also features amino acids, vitamin E, peptides, plant stem cells, algae extracts, and a flood of antioxidants. In fact, it does such a great job at keeping my skin perfectly hydrated, I sometimes skip my face creams and moisturizers altogether.



This hyaluronic acid serum from Dr. Barbara Sturm might be one of the most expensive, but it's also one of the most fabulous. (So many celebrities are obsessed with it!) It instantly delivers a thirst-quenching shot of moisture and glow to a dull and dehydrated complexion and features a mix of long-chain and short-chain HA to ensure deep penetration. Plus, the addition of purslane extract provides your daily quota of antioxidants for protection against free radicals.

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