



Pigment problems crop up for many women of MIDDLE EASTERN, SOUTH ASIAN, or SOUTHEAST ASIAN descent. See page 89 for ways to keep skin smooth and clear.

USE YOUR DNA TO

OUTSMART

If you're EAST ASIAN, you don't have to worry about wrinkles popping up early. But your skin could use some help staying firm and tight. See page 89.



For years, anti-aging products have been marketed as one size fits all. But what works for a fair, blond woman with Scandinavian roots isn't necessarily best for someone of Indian or African descent. "By the year 2050, more than 50% of the U.S. population will be considered to have skin of color, yet very little attention has been given to the aging differences that exist among various ethnic groups," notes Neelam Vashi, M.D., the founder and director of the Center for Ethnic Skin at the Boston University School of Medicine. She is the lead author of a recent study in the *Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology* that shows the impact of ethnicity (skin color, plus various genetic and cultural factors) on aging, from the changes we spot first to the skin-care habits that help us the most—and the ones to avoid. The message: It's time for a diverse approach to aging in our wonderfully diverse America.

On these pages you'll hear about the specific issues many women of your ethnicity can face as they grow older, and learn ways to fight back. Come from a mixed background? Focus on the advice for the group you resemble the most. OK, let's get started.

AGING



YOUR ETHNICITY PLAYS A MAJOR ROLE IN HOW YOUR SKIN MATURES. FACE DOWN YOUR CHALLENGE WITH A PERSONALIZED PLAN.

by **petra guglielmetti**
photographed by **ari michelson**



Chin up: Dark skin will stay smoother for longer, but it still needs some TLC.



YOUR PRODUCTS

Hydroquinone
Urban Skin Rx
Even Tone Night
Treatment (\$68,
urbanskinrx.com)

Tinted sunscreen
Hydropeptide Solar
Defense Tinted
Broad Spectrum
SPF 30 (\$48,
hydropeptide.com)

brown spots and larger darkened patches (usually around your cheeks, temples, or chin). “Uneven skin tone is the main complaint my African American patients share with me when it comes to aging,” says Heather Woolery-Lloyd, M.D., director of ethnic skin care at the University of Miami’s Department of Dermatology and Cutaneous Surgery. An added challenge is that the most effective fixes—peels, lasers, and fade creams—can sometimes irritate very dark skin. So Woolery-Lloyd has patients use a hydroquinone product for only a few months to target stubborn darkness. Dot a cream like **Urban Skin Rx Even Tone Night Treatment** onto darker areas with a cotton swab, which will help you avoid lightening the surrounding skin, too.

Most important, wear broad-spectrum SPF 30 sunscreen daily to fend off future discoloration. (Research has shown that even the darkest skin has the equivalent of only about SPF 13.) Most dermatologists recommend a mineral sunscreen with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, but it can leave a whitish cast on black complexions. **Hydropeptide Solar Defense Tinted Broad Spectrum SPF 30** adapts to your specific skin tone. It also guards against another skin shift you may notice with age: loss of luminosity. Young skin has a translucent quality because it reflects light uniformly; over time, sun damage can make that surface uneven and duller. (Gentle exfoliation will help too.) →

BLACK

(Your ancestors are from Africa—the western, central, southern, or eastern regions—or parts of the Caribbean.)

THE CHALLENGE | uneven skin tone

You can expect to stay wrinkle-free for at least a decade longer than your Caucasian friends. The biggest factor contributing to your line immunity may be the color of your skin. A dark complexion is a sign of skin that has more melanin, the protective pigment that blocks UV rays from damaging collagen and elastin. In very dark skin, melanosomes—pigment-containing clusters—are larger and better dis-

persed. Another advantage: Your stratum corneum, the skin’s outer layer, tends to be thicker, with larger, more plentiful, more active fibroblasts (cells that churn out collagen).

But no amount of melanin can keep you looking 22 forever. And having more of it can cause hyperpigmentation, which occurs when pigment cells overreact to the sun and other forms of irritation, leaving you with



YOUR PRODUCTS

Antioxidant sunscreen

Elizabeth Arden
Prevage City Smart
Broad Spectrum
SPF 50 Hydrating
Shield (\$68,
elizabetharden.com)

Peptide moisturizer

Olay Regenerist
Micro-Sculpting
Cream (\$27,
drugstores)

Daily sunscreen is key to keeping fair skin line-free. Pair it with the right wrinkle fighters.

their appearance. Either way, your number one priority—daily, without fail—should be sun protection. “Apply broad-spectrum SPF 30 every morning, not just when you’re going to the beach or pool,” Berson says. “When you factor in the incidental sun exposure you get every day—running errands, walking the dog, sitting in your car—it significantly contributes to premature aging.” Another way to prevent damage: Layer on antioxidants like vitamin C, vitamin E, green tea, or niacinamide. Many sunscreens are now formulated with these free radical-scavenging warriors. **Elizabeth Arden Prevage City Smart Broad Spectrum SPF 50 Hydrating Shield** is one we like.

To make existing lines look better, boost collagen production with a prescription retinoid or over-the-counter retinol applied at night. (See page 89 for a product that will do the job.) In the morning, layer a moisturizer with peptides under your sunscreen. When collagen breaks down, it leads to the development of wrinkles. Peptides can stimulate new collagen production, improving the appearance of lines. Even better if your cream contains heavy-duty hydrators like hyaluronic acid, glycerin, and ceramides—after all, moisturized skin is plumper skin. **Olay Regenerist Micro-Sculpting Cream** contains a patented amino-peptide complex paired with a hefty dose of glycerin and hyaluronic acid.

CAUCASIAN

(Your ancestors are from Europe, northern Africa, or southwestern Asia.)

THE CHALLENGE | wrinkles + lines

Your paler complexion doesn’t have much melanin, a natural pigment that protects skin from sun damage, the primary cause of fine lines and wrinkles. This is why you may start to notice crow’s-feet and laugh lines sooner than other women might. “UV light damages collagen and elastin, the proteins that make skin smooth and firm,” explains Diane Berson, M.D., an associate professor

of dermatology at the Weill Cornell Medical College in New York. Not helping things: Your skin doesn’t spring back well, and its protective outer layer, called the stratum corneum, is thin. Both factors mean wrinkles show up earlier and will stick around.

You can wear those lines like a badge of honor, proof of a life well lived, or you can try to diminish

LATINA

(Your ancestors are from Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Central America, or South America.)

THE CHALLENGE | melasma

Your olive skin offers natural protection from sun damage, and one recent UCLA study revealed that, on a molecular level, Latinas age at a slower rate than Caucasians. Cheers to that, but here's your catch: melasma, which can also pop up in African American skin. The condition often starts in response to hormonal changes like the ones that happen during pregnancy or menopause, or if you go on the Pill. Melasma's irregularly shaped brown patches usually appear on the upper lip, forehead, and cheeks. It can develop into a chronic skin challenge that worsens with age and may be triggered by a variety of factors: inflammation, stress, external irritants, even the sun. Because Latinas' ancestry often includes European heritage, your complexion may be sensitive in the same way that fair, rosy skin is, even if you're darker, says dermatologist Vivian Bucay,



Because Latina skin is sensitive to all kinds of light, the right protection is key.



YOUR PRODUCTS

Antioxidant serum

Beauty Rx by Dr. Schultz Triple Vitamin C Serum (\$95, beautyrx.com)

Lightening cream

SkinMedica Lytera 2.0 Pigment Correcting Serum (\$154, skinmedica.com for locations)

M.D., of San Antonio, who has also practiced in Mexico City.

While you can't change some of these factors, melasma can be minimized (if not cured altogether). "There's a melasma dimmer switch—you can slide it to where the pigment becomes invisible, even if you don't turn it off completely," says Bucay.

The most important step: Apply a broad-spectrum tinted sunscreen with titanium dioxide or zinc oxide like the one on page 80. "It's not just the UVA and UVB you need to worry about," says Marina Peredo, M.D., an associate clinical professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York. "Visible light—even the light you get from sitting in front of a

computer screen all day—can trigger melasma, and mineral sunscreens protect against this better." For an added shield, apply an antioxidant serum with vitamin C in the morning to lighten existing dark patches and zap inflammation-causing free radicals. We like **Beauty Rx by Dr. Schultz Triple Vitamin C Serum**.

To help fade melasma that's already surfaced, you'll want to try a lightening cream with niacinamide or tranexamic acid, such as **SkinMedica Lytera 2.0 Pigment Correcting Serum**. Lasers and in-office chemical peels can work, but you run the risk of triggering more melasma, so they should be a last resort and done by an experienced dermatologist. →



MIDDLE EASTERN, SOUTH ASIAN, OR SOUTHEAST ASIAN

(Your ancestors are from Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Thailand, Cambodia, or Vietnam.)

THE CHALLENGE | dark spots

If your family hails from one of these regions, your complexion could fall anywhere on the spectrum from light to very dark, but it's about more than just skin tone for you. No matter what your color, you tend to have a lot of sun-protective melanin in your skin. This also makes you prone to hyperpigmentation, particularly to dark spots that form as the result of a blemish, rash, injury, or irritation. Docs call this postinflammatory hyperpigmentation. Preventing future spots is so much easier than dialing back blotches that already dot your skin. So start with a daily sunscreen that's not just broad-spectrum but also blocks visible light, which has been shown to trigger pigmentation. Look for a mineral-based blocker with zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. You can use the tinted sunscreen we recommend on page 80—it won't leave an ashy cast on your skin.

Addressing acne is another key step in preventing new spots, since scarring and pigment changes can stick around on your skin long after a pimple has gone away. Use over-the-counter acne products with salicylic acid, benzoyl peroxide, or retinoids at the first signs of a breakout—and please, no picking at your skin! Try **Clinique Acne Solutions All-Over Clearing Treatment**. For more stubborn darkness, apply a hydroquinone fading cream (see page 80 for a product recommendation) to that area alone. After you get results—hang in there; it can take several months to see a change—stop using the hydroquinone product and maintain your even tone with a retinol like the one we feature at right. Use it at night after you've washed your face.



YOUR PRODUCT

Acne treatment

Clinique Acne Solutions
All-Over Clearing Treatment
(\$23, clinique.com)



EAST ASIAN

(Your ancestors are from China, Korea, or Japan.)

THE CHALLENGE | sagging skin

You have a few advantages when it comes to wrinkles: a thicker dermis and higher levels of UV-protective melanin (yes, even if you're fair). When you combine that with a traditional emphasis on sunscreen use, you'll stave off lines for up to 10 years longer than your Caucasian friends. "Because the classic Asian ideal of beauty is fair, even, poreless skin, my East Asian patients tend to emphasize sun protection from an early age," says dermatologist Annie Chiu, M.D., of the Derm Institute in Los Angeles. "Things like daily SPF and the use of sun umbrellas are normal."

Even so, East Asian women often deal with sagging, which can become noticeable as early as in their thirties. The reason: shrinking of the anatomical structures that hold skin taut, including facial bones and fat in the cheeks. "Asians typically have less prominent facial fat pads to begin with and sometimes have a lower BMI, which can make fat loss more prominent sooner," Chiu explains. A cultural tendency toward diets lower in calcium and vitamin D may also contribute.

There's no such thing as a face-lift in a jar, but topical treatments that plump and tighten skin can help. The key ingredients to incorporate: peptides and retinol. **First Aid Beauty Skin Lab Retinol Serum** has both; start by applying it every other night. "Asian skin can be a bit more sensitive, so you don't want to overdo it with retinol," Chiu says. Applying a daily antioxidant serum like the one on page 85 will guard against dark spots. (That extra melanin makes you prone, even if you're an SPF junkie.) If you're already starting to see them show up, Chiu recommends a series of physician-strength chemical peels. ■



YOUR PRODUCT

Retinol

First Aid Beauty Skin
Lab Retinol Serum
(\$58, [Sephora](http://Sephora.com))