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## Hyaluronic Acid: What, When, Why

Hydration is the key benefit for all skin types that forms the foundation for overall healthy-looking skin. That's why estheticians and skin care experts alike love hyaluronic acid (HA). You may have heard of it, but it's more than just a buzzword. HA is a substance found naturally in our skin that holds water and keeps our skin hydrated and plump. It's also an effective ingredient for those wanting to improve the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. Keep reading to find out exactly what HA is, what does HA do and all its incredible skin care benefits!

### What Is Hyaluronic Acid?

HA is a humectant (meaning that it draws moisture into the skin) critical for keeping your skin healthy and hydrated. It has the ability to hold up to 1000 times its weight in water! Naturally produced by the body, you'll find the largest amounts of HA in your connective tissue and in the epidermis (the outermost layer of the skin) where it provides moisture, plumpness, firmness, and suppleness to the skin. HA is also present in the eyes and in the joint spaces, where its main function is to retain water to keep your tissues well lubricated and moist. This substance draws water from the deeper layers of our skin as well as from the air, delivering and maintaining lasting hydration into the skin's surface.

Loss of HA in your skin causes visible signs of aging such as fine lines and wrinkles. In dry climates or during harsh weather, always lock hydration into the epidermis with a moisturizer whenever you incorporate HA into your skin care routine. However, as you age, your skin's stores of HA naturally deplete, starting at age 18 with up to 50% gone by age 40. The loss of HA is not just from aging, but from the sun and environmental pollution, which induces the generation of free radicals (oxidative stress) and therefore, wrinkles and fine lines.

### When Should I Use Hyaluronic Acid?

All skin types and conditions require hydration to maintain the integrity of the skin barrier to prevent infection. In particular, you'll benefit from HA if you have dry skin, or a condition called dehydrated skin. If you have genetically dry skin, your skin lacks the oil needed to hold in moisture, leaving your complexion dry and cracked.



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Or, if your skin lacks its normal level of hydration, this may cause dehydrated skin (a condition, not a skin type). If you suffer from dry or dehydrated skin, you'll find HA enormously helpful. Even those without chronically dehydrated skin will benefit from hyaluronic acid during extreme weather conditions, in dry environments, or when winter rolls around. Central heating can really do a number on our skin, leaving it flaky and parched.

Keep in mind that in dry climates or when humidity levels are low, the water drawn from within the body could evaporate, leaving skin drier than it was. This is why when you incorporate HA into your skin care routine, you should also use moisturizer to lock in that hydration under the epidermis, especially in dry climates or harsh weather.

### *Hyaluronic Acid Structure And Different Molecular Weights*

You may also notice various molecular weights on different skin care product labels. This relates to how deeply the molecule can go into the skin. Well+Good ([wellandgood.com](http://wellandgood.com)) says that low and medium-weight "hyaluronan molecules" penetrate deeper into the skin's structure, providing "maximum below-the-surface hydration" which rehydrates skin cells over time.

As board certified dermatologist Rina Allawh, MD, says to Healthline.com, "Each molecule is assigned a molecular weight, which inversely relates to how deep the molecule can penetrate the skin." The lower the molecular weight, the deeper the molecules can go.

Low molecular weight HA, which absorbs into the skin and delivers deep hydration

Medium molecular weight HA hydrates the surface and locks moisture in

Marshmallow root helps preserve moisture in the skin

These new additions, along with the existing Strawberry Rhubarb favorites, aim to deliver instant and deep hydration while also helping treat and support the skin moisture barrier for smooth, glowing and radiant skin.

### *Benefits Of Hyaluronic Acid For Each Skin Type*

#### Dry Skin

The skin type that benefits the most from HA is dry skin.



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Dry skin is defined by a lack of moisture and oil. By incorporating HA into your skin care routine, you will increase moisture, improve hydration, and subsequently lessen the appearance of dryness and fine lines and wrinkles.

### Combination Skin

If you have combination skin, you may be dealing with dry patches or flakiness as well as an oily T-Zone. Applying HA to those parched areas improves the appearance of dry-looking skin and draws moisture into that area.

### Oily Skin

Oily skin is caused by an overproduction of sebum, triggered by a number of factors including genetics, hormones, the environment, and climate changes. HA is even useful for oily skin, as it can train the skin to produce the right amount of oil for hydration so that the oil glands stop working overtime.

### Sensitive Skin

Sensitive skin can be easily irritated and prone to redness. Sometimes this skin type is due to genetics and hormonal imbalances, but skin can also become sensitive due to changes in weather or as a reaction to certain cosmetic products. Hydrated skin will help your skin develop a strong skin barrier so that your sensitive skin is less likely to react.

### Normal Skin

Every skin type can benefit from HA. Even normal skin that barely has breakouts or dryness requires hydration to keep the skin barrier intact and skin healthy.

Written by: Thea Christie  
[www.eminenceorganics.com](http://www.eminenceorganics.com)