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The anti-aging secrets real women swear by

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these ingredients speed up your skin’s natural exfoliation process, which kick-starts new collagen. Prescription retinoids can improve skin in as little as four weeks, while over-the-counter retinol products need at least 12 weeks to work. But retinoids aren’t for everyone: In some people, they can set off a slew of skin irritations, including redness, dryness, and flaking. Not only is this annoying, but new research shows that chronic inflammation can actually increase skin aging. For a nonirritating option, peptides—amino acids that exist naturally in skin—also boost collagen. Doctors recommend pentapeptides (called Matrixyl on ingredient labels) and copper peptides.


NEW BREAKTHROUGHS
You know how we said that chronic skin inflammation speeds up aging? Pay attention: Every skin cell contains a protein that reacts when it senses trouble, such as UV rays, pollution, and other aggressors lurking in our environment. When this protein reacts, it triggers inflammation that breaks down collagen. So unless you live in an underground bunker, chances are your skin cells are in a frequent state of reactive frenzy, even if you slather on sunscreen. But a new ingredient called Hexinol may change all that: “It’s able to act like a cog in the wheel of inflammation, halting the collagen damage before it occurs,” says Bank. In studies sponsored by RoC Skincare, which uses the ingredient, 87 percent of people using a Hexinol cream showed improvement in under-eye wrinkles after 16 weeks. Experts say you can, and should, use a Hexinol cream in conjunction with other anti-aging products. “It may allow you to use retinol with less irritation,” says Julie Karen, M.D., an assistant clinical professor of dermatology at New York University Langone Medical Center.

Another new wrinkle buster is Rhamnose, a plant sugar that—in an ironic twist—fights the aging effects of sugar on skin. Turns out, when your body digests sugar, it creates collagen-destroying molecules in your bloodstream. This process is known as glycation. But two recent studies have shown that Rhamnose is able to keep glycation from harming skin cells while also triggering new collagen. “What’s impressive is that Rhamnose can penetrate into the hard-to-reach second layer of skin, so it affects more change deeper down,” says Emmy Graber, M.D., an assistant professor of dermatology at Boston University School of Medicine. “Retinol is a tough act to follow, but this may come close and be less irritating.”

WHERE TO FIND THEM: Hexinol is exclusive to RoC Skincare; try RoC Multi Correxion 5 in 1 Daily Moisturizer with SPF 30, $28.99. For Rhamnose, try Vichy LiftActiv Night Cream, $50. (25 readers will win it; see page 171 for details.)