

An Esthi and a Derm Explain Ceramides and Why You Need Them STAT

There are a few ingredients that you probably see used over and over again in every cult-favorite skincare product: [hyaluronic acid](#), [niacinamide](#), [retinol](#), and [vitamin C](#) are just a few. But another one you'll probably encounter frequently is ceramides. But what are ceramides exactly?

If you're someone who is constantly battling dry skin or you have chronic skin conditions like eczema and psoriasis, chances are you could use some ceramides in your routine. I have struggled with eczema breakouts since college, and ceramide-packed skincare products are always on rotation in my routine to help calm down my inflammation and dryness.

Ahead, we asked [Vanessa Lee](#), RN, skincare expert and the founder of [The Things We Do](#), and board-certified dermatologist, Dr. Corey L. Hartman, founder of [Skin Wellness Dermatology](#) to break down what ceramides are, why your body and skin need them, and how to incorporate them into your routine.

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First up, what are ceramides?

According to Lee and Hartman, Ceramides are lipids also known as long-chain fatty acids that link with other important molecules to promote cellular function. In fact, ceramides make up to 50% of the skin composition to form the natural skin barrier and help to prevent permeability—this locks moisture into your skin, which helps prevent dryness and

irritation.

Additionally, ceramides—even more than retinol, niacinamide, and peptides—are one of the anti-aging “powerhouses” responsible for supporting skin’s dynamic nature. Two particular Ceramide precursors—phytosphingosine and sphingolipids—actually help skin make more ceramides. They’re often described as the body’s natural moisturizer to prevent dehydration. They also act as a natural antioxidant, protecting the skin from environmental aggressors like pollution and dry air.

Ceramides are essentially the glue that holds our skin cells together to keep our skin barrier intact and healthy.

A healthy skin barrier helps seal in moisture and seal out impurities, keeping your skin looking and feeling hydrated, youthful, and supple.

What are the benefits of ceramides?

As the skin’s natural moisturizer, Hartman explains that ceramides aid in preserving the skin by creating a protective layer that helps prevent the loss of moisture and shields the skin from environmental aggressors. They play an essential role in keeping dryness, dehydration, and premature signs of aging at bay. Hartman adds: “Ceramides act as linkers between epidermal skin cells—like the cement between bricks in a wall—to help seal up the skin barrier, to protect the deeper layers, and to prevent moisture loss.”

How do they stack up against other ingredients like it?

Ceramides are superior to similar ingredients because they are a natural component of a healthy skin barrier.

What are the benefits of topical ceramides?

Well-formulated (and properly packaged) skincare products containing ceramides will help reinforce your skin's barrier and increase hydration, giving you plumper, smoother, firmer-feeling skin with fewer visible lines and wrinkles, as well as fewer signs of sensitivity. Lee notes that one of the best parts of the ingredient is that it's compatible with all skin types—that is, every skin type needs and wants ceramides, so you don't have to worry about topical Ceramide-laden products sensitizing your skin.

Why do you need beauty products that contain ceramides?

Age and sun damage reduce the effectiveness of your skin's natural ceramides and can eventually deplete them, which weakens your skin's barrier. The results are drier, rougher skin, wrinkles, irritation, redness, and visible signs of dehydration. As your ceramide levels naturally decrease, you can replenish them with topical skincare products.

What happens when you don't have enough?

When your skin is lacking ceramides, the barrier gets compromised and you'll experience dryness and irritation. [Studies show](#) that low ceramide levels could be the leading cause of dry skin conditions like eczema. When your skin lacks the right ratio of ceramides, the barrier doesn't perform the way it's supposed to and your skin's health goes haywire.

Who should use them?

Hartman believes everyone should use ceramides, but especially those with dry skin, eczema, or a compromised skin barrier. They should be used in daily moisturizers that are applied after a bath or shower to lock in the moisture.

Below, Hartman shares his top products with ceramides...

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[Mario Badescu AHA & Ceramide Moisturizer](#)

Ideal for those with sensitive, dry skin. The nourishing formula won't leave a greasy feeling nor will it clog pores making it an ideal product for even those with acne breakouts.

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[Paula's Choice Clinical Ceramide-Enriched Firming Moisturizer](#)

This product contains vitamin C, retinol, and ceramides and provides 75% of the ingredients that I deem important to a comprehensive, preventative skincare regimen.

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[Skinceuticals Triple Lipid Restore](#)

This is a cult favorite that combines ceramides, free fatty

acids, and cholesterol to hydrate damaged, dry skin and provide an instant plumping effect to mature skin that tends to suffer sagging.

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[Cerave Moisturizing Cream](#)

An affordable staple that should be a part of any dry skincare regimen for the body. It provides the hydration and protection of a thick emollient without the mess. In fact, the finish is quite elegant.

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[First Aid Beauty Ultra Repair Cream](#)

This product combines ceramides, colloidal oatmeal, and shea butter to protect, nourish and hydrate even the driest, most sensitive skin. It is ideal for severely dehydrated skin.

Now, some of my personal tried-and-tested favorites...

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[Dr. Jart+ Ceramidin Liquid](#)

If your skin is on the drier side and you're looking for a way to incorporate more moisture into your routine, try out this ceramide-packed hydrating liquid. This toner is a staple in my nighttime routine because it falls somewhere between an essence and a serum, giving my skin a supple bouncy glow. It also contains fig, Centella Asiatica, and Phyto extracts to

help treat dry and flaky skin whenever I'm experiencing an eczema breakout.

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[The Inkey List Ceramide Hydrating Night Treatment](#)

You don't have to spend an arm and a leg on a treatment serum that actually works. This hydrating booster serum combines ceramides with hyaluronic acid to really infuse your skin with moisture overnight. It has a lightweight texture that layers well with the rest of your products—though truthfully, you might not need any other serums besides this one.

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[Drunk Elephant Lala Retro Whipped Moisturizer With Ceramides](#)

The reformulation of this cult-favorite moisturizer only made it better thanks to the new inclusion of ceramides. This thick, whipped formula is deeply hydrating and packed with hydrating ingredients like African oils and plant-derived lipids. This serves as an ultra-nourishing last step in your evening skincare routine to really seal in hydration so you wake up with glowy, dewy skin.

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[CeraVe Hydrating Facial Cleanser](#)

for Normal to Dry Skin

As you probably know, CeraVe gets its name from the fact that all of its products are formulated with a high concentration of ceramides. So naturally, I love anything and everything they come out with—including this cleanser. It's the perfect go-to for daily use or whenever your skin is feeling a little sensitive. Plus, you really can't beat the price point for how much product you get.

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Youth To The People Dream Eye Cream With Vitamin C and Ceramides

If your under eyes are looking a little dull and sallow, try out this brightening eye cream from Youth to the People. Like The Inkey List's serum, this cream combines hyaluronic acid and ceramides to plump the area around your eyes. It also contains vitamin C to brighten and firm the skin, as well as goji stem cells to help reduce the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

Now that you know the benefits of ceramides, you can invest in products that will help keep your skin hydrated, fresh, and glowy. It's a powerful ingredient that you'll be using in your routine for many years to come.

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