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A Plastic Surgeon and Derm Agree: These Are the Overnight Masks That Give You Hydrated, Brighter Skin by Morning



Sometimes, no amount of hydrating serums or heavy moisturizers can do the trick—our skin is just *too* thirsty. Especially now, as the air turns crisp and summer melts into fall, hydration isn't as easy as it once was. That dry air can wreak

havoc on our fragile faces. Which is why going to bed in an overnight hydrating mask a few times a week can be a dream come true for parched skin.

"Overnight masks are designed to help ingredients penetrate deeper into the skin as you sleep," explains Michael Horn, MD, a board-certified plastic surgeon at Lake Shore Plastic Surgery in Chicago. "An overnight mask serves as a barrier and sealant. A light coating can prevent dirt and dust from closing in on pores while locking in other active products, letting all the good work more effectively without evaporating."

As it happens, bedtime is one of the best times to rehydrate. **Dr. Horn says that when you're in a deep sleep (usually between 10 P.M. and 2 A.M.), the skin's metabolism increases, escalating cell turnover and renewal. "Using an overnight mask gives the renewal process an extra push. Overnight masks also lock in moisture by sitting on top of your skin rather than getting immediately absorbed. Skin can recover moisture while excess water is processed for removal," he says.**

As you can imagine, not all overnight hydrating masks are created equal. Sussing out which ones are going to quench your thirst as opposed to the ones that will leave you thirsty for more is easy—all you have to do is keep reading.

What to look for (and what to avoid)

The big ingredient effective masks have are the occlusives, or fatty acids, which are what draw moisture to the skin and actually keep it in there. Think: jojoba oil, Argan oil, vitamin E—anything that keeps your face plump and un-parched.

Dermatologist Rachel Nazarian, MD, FAAD, recommends also keeping an eye out for hydrating and anti-inflammatory ingredients, like niacinamide and, of course, hyaluronic acid. "I love masks with ceramides, peptides, hydrating oils and fatty acids, such as shea butter, or olive extract," she says. "Occlusion, or covering of the ingredients with an emollient or sheet, can enhance penetration of the ingredients, making them more potent and effective."

As for what to avoid, steer clear from anything that dries out your skin—this will just negate the purpose of a hydrating mask in the first place. It seems obvious, but sometimes dehydrating ingredients can be sneaky. **Both experts say ingredients like alcohol, fragrance, clay, or activated charcoal can cause the opposite effect, and leave you more parched than quenched.**

How to use overnight hydrating masks

Most obviously, overnight masks are meant to be used overnight, putting in the work while you snooze. But using them too often can leave your skin oily and greasy, while not using them enough won't help, either. How often *should* you be using your overnight mask? It depends—on the mask type, skin type, and season. For most masks, 1-2 times a week should suffice.

"With colder seasons—and when the temperature drops and the air becomes dry and arid—use can be increased to 2-3 times weekly with many of the gentle, hydrating masks," Dr. Nazarian says. "Dry and sensitive skin types may want to consider more frequent use during the fall and winter to improve their skin barrier and minimize loss of moisture into the environment overnight. This can keep their skin healthy and prevent some of the classic irritation that happens during the colder months."

And of course, do your homework. Dr. Horn says even though most overnight masks are formulated on the gentler side, some aren't made to stay on your skin for too long. Others might interfere with *other* products you're using: "If your nighttime routine consists of retinol or any acids, be mindful not to use a mask with the same ingredients, as too much of any ingredient can irritate the skin. If your skin is super sensitive, ask your dermatologist for a direct recommendation."

Hit the hay in these overnight hydrating masks

[Bliss, Mighty Marshmallow Bright & Radiant Whipped Mask — \\$13.00](#)

Key ingredients: Marshmallow root extract, vitamin C, olive leaf extract

Dr. Nazarian recommends this dessert-inspired hydrating mask that's incredibly nourishing for your face. Much of its hydrating powers come from marshmallow root extract which actually enhances the water content in your skin, she says.

"I love that it's hypoallergenic, making it great for sensitive skin. It contains a combination of olive leaf extract (which improves loss of moisture from the skin) and also a cocktail of herbal oils and vitamin C to boost protection against free radical damage, and improve tone," she adds.

[Aesop, Sublime Replenishing Night Mask — \\$130.00](#)

Key ingredients: Vitamin E, niacinamide, hyaluronic acid

Albeit it pricey, Aesop's night masque is true to its name—sublime. That's thanks to the hefty load of occlusives in each jar, including vitamin E, niacinamide, and a smattering of oils, including jojoba, safflower, and rosemary leaf oil. Simply swipe a thin layer of the gel cream on clean skin before you crawl into bed and let it seep into your skin. You'll wake up softer, not heavy or clogged up, and noticeably brighter, too.

[Laneige, Water Sleeping Mask Overnight Gel — \\$29.00](#)

Key ingredients: Squalane, hyaluronic acid, green tea probiotics

Laneige is famous for its overnight lip mask, but you shouldn't sleep on this product, either. **Recommended by Dr. Horn, the Water Sleeping Mask Overnight Gel contains several soothing minerals that soak into the skin while you snooze, reducing inflammation, irritation, and redness. Bursts of mineral water and green tea probiotics help to restore moisture, too, rebalancing the skin barrier after a day of wear and tear.**

Elemis, Peptide4 Plumping Pillow Facial — \$68.00

Key ingredients: Peptide4, speedwell extract, Star Arvensis™

Hit the pillow with your face slathered in the Peptide4 Plumping Pillow Facial from Elemis to give your skin a restful eight hours. It's clinically proven to lock in moisture overnight, plumping it up and leaving it radiant in the AM. You can thank the Peptide4 for that, which is formulated to match your body's circadian rhythm and heal the skin barrier as you sleep, smoothing fine lines and wrinkles while it's on. Combined with antioxidants and Omega-3 fatty acids, you'll wake up glowing every time you use it.

Glow Recipe, Watermelon Glow AHA Night Treatment — \$39.00

Key ingredients: Hyaluronic acid, fruit AHAs, watermelon extract

Dr. Horn dubbed this the “perfect mask for anyone with rough or uneven skin texture.” Its AHAs, or alpha hydroxy acids, work together to to smooth and exfoliate overnight, so your complexion is hydrated and toned upon waking up. There’s a load of natural goodness in each jar, including juicy watermelon enzymes which make it so efficacious at brightening and lightening skin.

Dr. Jart+, Cicapair Tiger Grass Sleepair Intensive Mask — \$42.00

Key ingredients: Cica, niacinamide, glycerin

Never let your skin go to bed angry. Instead, Dr. Horn recommends smoothing a layer of this leave-on gel by Dr. Jart over it, which will nourish it overnight. “This mask uses Centella Asiatica, or cica (known for its healing properties), along with soothing herbs and minerals that help reduce redness and inflammation,” he says. “It’s ideal for sensitive skin.”

Ponds, Hydrate & Firm Sheet Mask (Pack of 3) — \$9.00

Key ingredients: Hyaluronic acid, agave extract, collagen

Not all of us have a full 6-8 hours to rehydrate. If that's the case, Dr. Nazarian recommends these sheet masks from Ponds, which are infused with hyaluronic acid and allantoin to moisturize in minutes.

“These are phenomenal ingredients because they work even greater in combination: Hyaluronic acid draws in the moisture while allantoin improves the quality of skin and can support the skin barrier,” she says. “This is a gentle option for people who have dry or sensitive skin, or those looking for a treatment to use more than once a week.”

Sand+Sky, Tasmanian Spring Water Intense Hydrating Mask — \$35.00

Key ingredients: Hyaluronic acid, Tasmanian spring water, sea kelp

Australian beauty brand Sand+Sky makes this ridiculously hydrating mask that will leave your face smoother than a baby's bottom the moment you wake up. Its hero ingredient is Tasmanian spring water which is naturally packed with nourishing minerals your skin will just slurp up. Layer on the hyaluronic acid, fermented sea kelp, and squalane, and putting your freshest face forward has never been easier. It's perfect for regular slugging or spot treatments when your skin is in need of a little *oomph*.

EltaMD Skin Recovery Night Mask — \$50.00

Key ingredients: AAComplex, and antioxidants

EltaMD, which is beloved by derms and Hailey Bieber alike, may be known for its best-in-class sunscreen (especially this tinted SPF), but the brand's latest launch is noteworthy, too. Its super science-y ingredient list is what makes it effective,

thanks to the AAComplex (EltAMD's patented brew of three amino acids that repair the skin barrier and fight redness and inflammation, plus infuse skin with moisture), and antioxidants (free radical damage fighters—you also find these naturally in foods like blueberries and salmon). The cool, gel consistency is also really satisfying to apply before bedtime, and it's fragrance-free. Wake up to hydrated, brighter, and happier skin.

Farmacy 10% Niacinamide Night Mask — \$42.00

Key ingredients: 10% niacinamide (vitamin B3), 3% panthenol (pro-vitamin B5) + beta-glucan, and blueberry seed oil

If you're complexion is in need of evening out, resurfacing, and an infusion of hydration, this Farmacy overnight mask is your new BFF. The niacinamide, which is a form of B3, smooths out skin and minimizes pores, while panthenol (a form of vitamin B5) works hand-in-hand with beta-glucan, which works overtime to rebalance the skin barrier's hydration levels and leaves the face more supple and bouncy-feeling. Lastly, the blueberry seed oil is an antioxidant that protects and brightens skin. It's another one of those masks that you can feel **actually** works the next morning.

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