

SKINFESSIONS What a Top Dermatologist Uses on Her Own Face

My name is Shirley Chi, M.D. I'm 40 and my issues are acne and rosacea. This is how I keep my inflammation in check.



A.M.

Step 1. Rosacea can be caused by stress and hormones, which dilate blood vessels, resulting in a red complexion. I don't want to aggravate my skin further, so I wash with soft water (I installed a filter in my house to remove irritating minerals like calcium) and use a creamy face wash that's hypoallergenic, which is the best bet for preventing skin reactions. *Neutrogena Ultra Gentle Daily Cleanser, \$9, neutrogena.com*

Step 2. I start with an antioxidant-packed serum to neutralize rosacea-provoking free radicals. Then I slather on a tinted sunscreen (it doubles as foundation). Mineral versions are best for irritable skin; they create a physical block, whereas chemical ones bind to skin to absorb the rays, creating microscopic chemical reactions that can be sensitizing. *SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic, \$163, skinceuticals.com; Tizo Ultra Zinc Body & Face Sunscreen Tinted SPF 40, \$40, tizofusion.com for retailers*



P.M.

Step 1. When I was younger, I took two cycles of super-drying prescription Accutane because I had resistant acne (the kind that won't go away with typical treatments). I still get occasional pimples, so I prefer a foaming cleanser, which mops away all excess oils without stripping skin and gives me a deep clean each night. *La Roche-Posay Effaclar Foaming Gel Cleanser, \$15, at Target*



Step 2. Most nights I just use a moisturizer rich in ceramides. Twice a week, though, I'll cocktail it with Renova, a creamy prescription retinoid that's less drying than gel models. I can't use it every night because it can cause irritation, but retinoids are great for acne and rosacea. They give blood vessels more structure by increasing collagen production to combat redness, and resurface the skin's outer layer to prevent clogs. *CeraVe Moisturizing Cream, \$15, at CVS/Pharmacy*



ONCE A WEEK

The same probiotics (the helpful bacteria that rebalance your flora) that people usually consume orally can also be applied topically. Essentially, these guys can repopulate the good bacteria on the surface of skin to stave off inflammation that pimple-causing p. acnes would otherwise create. Once a week, I apply probiotic-rich plain Greek yogurt mixed with honey on my face for about 30 minutes to keep skin calm.

SIX TIMES A YEAR

The in-office device SilkPeel (about \$175 a session) works like a steam cleaner for your face; the handpiece uses suction to pull out blackheads while also infusing skin with either salicylic acid to prevent pimples or hyaluronic acid to plump lines (you choose). I switch between those two, depending on how my skin is at that moment.

ONCE A YEAR

Because of its narrow wavelength, the VBeam pulsed dye laser (average price \$750 per treatment) is super precise at targeting redness. It works by flashing a light that absorbs all of the red and destroys it. Eventually, the redness does come back because, unfortunately, there isn't anything that cures rosacea, and I live in L.A., an area with extreme temperatures and dry weather, both of which provoke the condition.

My Clear-Skin Diet

What we ingest impacts our skin. The thing that was hardest for me to cut out was dairy. I gave it up about eight years ago to keep from getting breakouts; it's been shown to worsen acne in several studies. It seems that some milk-based products have hormones from cows in them, and these hormones stimulate the sebaceous glands and bring on breakouts in people with acne (not all people, it's important to note—I wouldn't go cutting dairy for no reason). Now, I eat no cheese, no yogurt, no ice cream. I started noticing a difference right away, and my skin has stayed pretty clear since I did it.

I SAVE THE DAIRY FOR FACE MASKS.

