THE KEY TO AGELESS SKIN



Most of what we do in life is work towards finding the middle; that balance between work and home, time alone with our mate and time with our children. Corporations started an initiative referred to as “work-life balance” some time ago, which ideally was meant to show that they understand production is effected when people can’t take the time to take care of other important things in life. Our health and skin is no different. We feel and look our best when we are closest to the right pH balance.

How familiar are you with pH balance and the important role it plays in maintaining beautiful, elastic skin? First, lets answer the question that only one could remember if they are “smarter than a 5th grader”; pH means “potential hydrogen”, which means every substance has a balance comprised of an acid-alkaline ratio, 0 being highly acidic and 14 being highly alkaline. This ratio is important for the skin because we all have an acid mantle, which is our outer most layer of skin that will unveil more information largely through physical appearance. In order for the acid mantle to function at its strongest, it should have an acidic balance of 5.5. Otherwise, if too alkaline, side effects could come in the form of eczema, dry patches, susceptibility to sun damage, and thin, wrinkled skin that comes from the inhibition of collagen-destroying enzymes due to an inflammatory response. In fact, a study published in the *British Journal of Dermatology* by Greg Hillebrand, PhD, of P&G Beauty Science showed that women with an alkaline stratum corneum (the skin's outermost layer) developed more fine lines and crow's feet than those with acidic skin over an eight-year period.

How can we be certain our skin is leaning towards natural acidity? There are two ways to determine skin acid-alkaline pH: through saliva and by the examination of the skin. Healthily balanced pH skin is slightly moist-looking and plump with a healthy glow. Alternatively, skin that is too alkaline is acne-prone, very dry or excessively oily. Altogether, if you have skin issues, the number one problem is an upset pH.

**Top Ways Alkalinity is Raised**

Most soap is highly alkaline, and washing your face with these soaps can cause an increase in skin alkalinity, moving levels outside of the natural range. Most standard bar soaps have an alkalinity up to 9, which will create that tight, dry feeling from the formation of biofilm. This is not good because it leaves the skin more prone to damage, and especially following the hot summer weather, the skin is simply in need of some attention in order to bring the pH level back to “the middle”.

According to Naturopath and Neuroscientist Maria Barnes, N.D., the best way to address pH balance is attacking cell health from the inside out. As we are approaching the end of the summer, right when the leaves begin to fall, make sure you address your skin pH by making an appointment with a highly-trained and qualified aesthetician. If they are good at what they do, they will first convince you to drop the soap and switch to a quality cleanser for your skin type that won’t strip away the skin’s natural oils. Peels with an exfoliating effect are also highly recommended during the fall. They contribute to bringing up the skin’s acidity.

Atlanta’s top beauty and wellness doctor, Maria Barnes, N.D., also says that Ageless Obsessions’ peel line by Environ includes a range for all skin types that will reverse the effects of aging due to damaged skin and thwarted pH balance. Additionally, you want to be very careful when you don’t trust who you are receiving treatments from because an epidermal pH that is too acidic can be a consequence of too strong or too frequent peels. If this happens, the side effect is a sensitive and inflamed-prone complexion. The good news for all of us is that when connecting with the right products, the skin can return back to a healthy place by finding its natural pH balance, and you can live “ageless” and happy by investing in the type of treatment and care that will keep you in the middle.

Written by Maria Barnes, N.D.