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There's No Way Flaxseed Masks Are Better Than Botox, Right?

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I have a love-hate relationship with TikTok. There are times when I praise the app for its innovative hacks and useful product suggestions, and then there are the times when I curse it for bringing me trends that are so far-fetched, I feel the need to write a story myth-busting them.

Recently, a video went viral in which a woman shows off "Botox that you make at home." Her recipe? Taking 1/2 cup of flax seeds and three cups of water, boiling it, and then letting it cool prior to applying it all over her face (and even her hair). The video has more than 735,000 likes and 6.5 million views, and

when I saw it for the first time, I scrolled right past, since my bullsh*t meter was ringing off the hook. Then my mom sent me a link to the viral TikTok video with the message, "I'm going to make this mask and rub it over my entire body!" Which is when I knew I needed to get involved.

To be clear: flaxseeds are loaded with nutrients — there's no question about that. But can they actually have the same face-freezing effects as a [neurotoxin like Botox](#)? Ahead, skin-care experts break down everything to know about the viral trend, like what the benefits of using flaxseed are, and whether or not it's time to cancel your biannual injection appointments.

The Benefits of Flaxseed

"Flaxseeds have been known as a superfood with antioxidant properties [that] support digestive health when taken orally for some time," [Teresa Song, MD](#), board-certified dermatologist at [Marmur Medical](#), tells POPSUGAR. They're loaded with nutrients such as magnesium, zinc, vitamin B6, and iron. They're also rich in fiber, and [one study](#) even showed that eating four tablespoons of flaxseed per day helped lower cholesterol levels. Using them topically, though, is a whole different ballgame.

Can Using Flaxseed on Your Skin Replace Neurotoxins?

"The simple answer is no, there is currently no scientific evidence of topical flaxseed having significant effects," double-board certified facial plastic surgeon [Lauren Moy, MD](#), says. "There may be a very temporary skin-tightening appearance due to the gel-like consistency of flaxseeds, but it is not comparable to neurotoxins such as Botox." Additionally, Dr. Moy says that any reported benefits from flaxseeds in this capacity are anecdotal. "Scientifically, the way neurotoxins work are not replicable by topical creams or masks since they are not able to penetrate deep enough and have a different mechanism of action," she says.

Dr. Song adds that the current TikTok trend shows users boiling their homemade flax masks, and then applying them once they've cooled down. "It's important to note that flaxseed oils are very sensitive to heat and are produced by a process called cold pressing," she says. "It's questionable if the nutrients are preserved in the mask after it has been boiled in hot water for 10 minutes."

Proven Wrinkle Treatments to Try Instead

"There is no at-home remedy that will replace the effect of [neurotoxins]," [Brooke Jeffy, MD](#), board-certified dermatologist and founder of [BTWN](#), says. "There are some at-home treatments that can improve collagen to help soften fine lines." The most important? Using sun protection to reduce collagen loss from chronic sun damage, Dr. Jeffy says. "The use of topicals containing antioxidants and

retinol help improve collagen, [and] a diet rich in antioxidants as well as stress management with adequate sleep and exercise is crucial."

She also suggests limiting the facial expressions you make, trying to relax the muscles that induce wrinkles, as well as avoiding drinking from a straw to minimize wrinkles around the mouth.

"Procedurally speaking," [Kunal Malik, MD](#), board-certified general and cosmetic dermatologist says, "some treatments patients can consider that offer similar effects as neurotoxins include resurfacing lasers that can stimulate collagen and elastin." He also agrees with Dr. Jeffy that topical options such as retinols and retinoids have a lot of evidence showing they can prevent and treat fine lines and wrinkles. "Some good over-the-counter options include the [CeraVe Resurfacing Retinol Serum \(\\$20\)](#), [ROC Retinol Correction Deep Wrinkle Facial Filler with Hyaluronic Acid \(\\$13\)](#), as well as [Adapalene 0.1% Gel \(\\$15\)](#)."



CeraVe Resurfacing Retinol Serum
\$20

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Ultimately, while nothing will replace neurotoxins, you can't go wrong with a well-thought-out skin-care routine that includes SPF, a vitamin C serum, a retinol, and LED light therapy.



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