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Beauty / Skin Care

Is salmon sperm the secret to amazing skin? We asked derms about the buzzy beauty trend

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Molly Flores/CNN Underscored

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Salmon sperm skin care quick picks

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- **Under-eye patches:** [Abib PDRN Retinal Eye Patch](#)
- **Moisturizer:** [Gangnam Glow Rejunol Mucin PDRN Facial Cream](#)
- **Sheet mask:** [Medicube Salmon PDRN Pink Collagen Jelly Gel Mask](#)
- **Neck cream:** [Valmont V-Lift Neck Cream](#)

If salmon sperm skin care is a phrase you've heard before, it was likely within the context of the anti-aging facials celebrities can't seem to get enough of right now. With claims of instantly glowing and youthful skin, it's no wonder the [K-beauty](#) ingredient has become a [beauty trend](#) in and of itself, spreading beyond in-office treatments into [face moisturizers](#), [serums](#), [face masks](#) and beyond.

So, what exactly is salmon sperm doing in our [skin care](#), and what are the benefits of this seemingly off-putting ingredient? I consulted four experts, including three dermatologists and a licensed esthetician, to answer the questions on all of our minds as well as share some of their top product recommendations you can try out for yourself.



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First popularized in South Korea, salmon sperm skin care refers to skin care products that include salmon-derived polydeoxyribonucleotide (PDRN), or purified DNA fragments.

"PDRNs are polynucleotides that are derived from salmon sperm," [Dr. Michelle Henry](#), board-certified dermatologist and founder of [Skin & Aesthetic Surgery of Manhattan](#), said. "The products themselves don't contain salmon sperm; they contain fragments that are derived from salmon sperm."

Salmon PDRN has become increasingly popular, particularly in South Korea and parts of Europe, for a couple reasons. "The DNA extracted is surprisingly rich in protein and nucleic acid," [Dr. Ellen Marmur](#), board-certified dermatologist and founder of [MMSkincare](#), said. "These ingredients hold rejuvenating qualities that are perfect for an anti-aging effect."

According to [Dr. Dendy Engelman](#), a board-certified cosmetic dermatologist and Mohs surgeon at the [Shafer Clinic](#), this extracted DNA also closely resembles human DNA, making it effective and well tolerated in skin care products. Benefits include the stimulation of skin regeneration, hydration and collagen production.



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In-office salmon sperm treatments, such as the buzzy and provocative "salmon sperm facial," have a star-studded clientele, with high-profile fans that include Kim Kardashian and Jennifer Aniston. "Treatments often combine microneedling or lasers with PDRN to drive the ingredient deeper, leading to firmer, healthier, more luminous skin," Engelman said.

The best part is that incorporating salmon PDRN products into your at-home routine won't have to feel like you're ingesting it on an episode of "Fear Factor" since they can

be used topically too. These products, which include everything from sheet masks to serums, combine PDRN with other popular skin care ingredients to target a range of skin concerns from home and without the high price tag associated with in-office treatments.

Benefits of salmon sperm skin care

"Salmon PDRN is used for its ability to stimulate collagen production, accelerate the healing of open skin, deeply hydrate and reduce inflammation," Engelman said. "It helps repair the skin barrier, improve elasticity and can even soften fine lines and texture over time."

According to [Olga Skydan](#), a licensed aesthetician with a medical degree in dermatology in Ukraine and medical expert board member at [Luvly](#), many dermatologists use it in an injectable form for post-acne scarring or dull skin, and even after laser for its anti-

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Salmon sperm skin care products you can use at home

[Rejuran Advanced Anti-Aging Retinol + c-PDRN Serum](#)



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The most well-known brand when it comes to PDRN products, Rejuran's anti-aging serum is a favorite amongst our experts. "I'm particularly impressed by this product, which combines salmon DNA with stabilized [vitamin C](#) and [retinol](#) to target fine lines, texture and pigmentation," Engelman said. Both she and Marmur recommend it for those in search of a comprehensive anti-aging approach.

\$80 at Amazon

\$80 at Rejuran

[Medicube PDRN Pink Collagen Exosome Shot](#)



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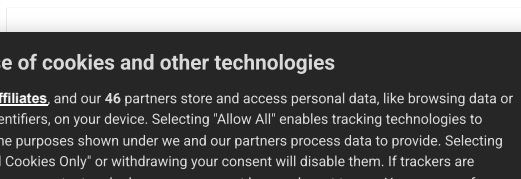
For those just dipping their toes into the world of PDRN skin care, both Henry and Marmur recommend this under-\$25 [spicule serum that enhances your skin care's absorption](#). It's available in two different parts per million (PPM) formulas of varying concentrations, both of which target a range of skin care concerns, from boosting elasticity to smoothing textured or rough skin to boosting hydration, Henry said. If you have sensitive skin, be sure to start with the gentler option.

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~~\$39~~ \$23 at Medicube

~~\$39~~ \$24 at YesStyle

[VT Cosmetics PDRN 100 Essence](#)



"You can get PDRN from salmon, but

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ceramide complex and soothing panthenol.

~~\$43~~ \$32 at Amazon

\$32 at Ulta

~~\$46~~ \$32 at Olive Young

~~\$43~~ \$35 at YesStyle

Genabelle PDRN Vita Toning Ampoule



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Skydan describes this ampoule — a term generally used to describe highly concentrated and targeted liquid skin care products — as a solid introduction to PDRN skin care. “It blends salmon DNA with [niacinamide](#) and vitamins to brighten, hydrate and improve texture,” she said, adding that it’s a great option “for people dealing with dull or uneven skin and want that 'glass skin' finish without irritating ingredients.” She recommends applying two to three drops of the product after cleansing but before your moisturizer, both in the morning and at night.

\$29 at Amazon

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Editor Favorite

Abib PDRN Retinal Eye Patch



Beauty and fashion editor [Sophie Shaw](#) recently added these anti-aging [under-eye patches](#) into her routine. They’re saturated in a vegan PDRN serum that’s derived from cica, ginkgo and bamboo, and the formula also contains caffeine, niacinamide and retinal to help reduce puffiness and fine lines.

\$21 at Amazon

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[beauty staples](#), meet in this [face moisturizer](#). While PDRN is commonly touted for its anti-aging benefits, it's also an effective way to keep your skin hydrated, according to Marmur. "The DNA strands have a rich network of hydrogen bonds capable of carrying water," she said, providing deep hydration to your skin for that plump and healthy look. A nourishing cream, such as this option, is also an easy way to maximize your [overnight skin care](#) routine.

₩35 \$28 at YesStyle

\$33 at Amazon

[Derma Factory PDRN 4% Ampoule](#)



Olive Young

"This is one of the strongest over-the-counter PDRN products on the market, with a 4% concentration," Skydan said. "It's best for people dealing with compromised skin barriers, post-acne inflammation or irritation after treatments like microneedling." She recommends applying it at night on clean skin and following it up with a gentle moisturizer. "If your skin is sensitive, start with twice a week and then build up," she said, adding that it's best to keep it in a cool, dark place to preserve the formula's stability.

₩14 \$13 at Olive Young

Editor Favorite

[Centellian 24 360° Shot PDRN Active Serum](#)



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Shaw also likes this PDRN serum that leaves her skin plump and hydrated. It contains collagen, ginseng root, turmeric and niacinamide to fortify the skin. She likes to use her [Medicube Mini Booster Pro](#) to smooth the gel formula over her skin and ensure maximum absorption.

₩48 \$35 at Amazon

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green tea. The cruelty-free formulation also includes retinol to help firm skin and smooth the appearance of fine lines.

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Medicube Salmon PDRN Pink Collagen Jelly Gel Mask



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Engelman recommends this jelly-textured [face mask](#), which is designed to be left on the skin for about three to four hours. Once your skin has completely absorbed the mask, you'll notice it will transform from opaque to transparent. "It contains salmon PDRN, hydrolyzed collagen, peptides and niacinamides to hydrate, brighten and plump the skin," she said.

~~\$21~~ \$17 at Amazon

Valmont V-Lift Neck Cream



Amazon

If you're looking for an anti-aging product to target both your neck and face, Marmur recommends this luxury cream from Valmont, a brand that incorporates highly polymerized salmon roe DNA into its V-Lift collection. "I like this specifically because it's made for your neck, which tends to age faster than the skin on our faces," she said. "It absorbs easily and gives quick results."

\$340 at Amazon

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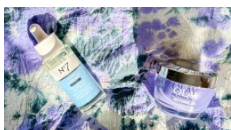
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dewy and resilient complexion, Engelman recommends this "beautifully formulated intensive treatment that leverages high-concentration PDRN" for improving skin elasticity and hydration. "It works best incorporated into an evening regimen," she said, advising clients with sensitive skin to introduce it into their routine gradually to minimize irritation.

\$33 at Amazon



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FAQs

The following FAQs have been answered by dermatologists Dr. Dendy Engelman, Dr. Michelle Henry, Dr. Ellen Marmur and Olga Skydan.

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Meet our experts

For this article, we consulted the following skin experts to gain their professional insights.

- [Dr. Dendy Engelman](#), board-certified cosmetic dermatologist and Mohs surgeon at [Shafer Clinic](#) in New York
- [Dr. Michelle Henry](#), board-certified dermatologist and founder of [Skin & Aesthetic Surgery of Manhattan](#)
- [Dr. Ellen Marmur](#), board-certified dermatologist and founder of [MMSkincare](#)
- [Olga Skydan](#), licensed aesthetician with a medical degree in dermatology in Ukraine and medical expert board member at [Luvly](#)

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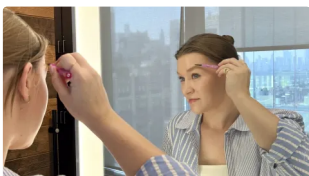
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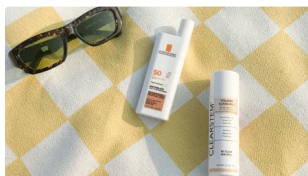
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