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Beauty / Skin Care

What to know about exosomes in skin care, and the products dermatologists actually recommend

By [Noelle Ike](#), CNN Underscored

Published 10:00 AM EDT, Sat August 8, 2026



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From buzzy ingredients like [salmon sperm](#) and [spicule skin care](#) to tried and true categories like retinol [face serums](#) and nourishing [eye creams](#), the world of [skin care](#) is vast and ever-changing, and one of the trendiest ingredients — exosomes — is no exception. So what exactly are they, who are they right for and are they actually worth trying out? We've consulted expert dermatologists on all these questions and more.

What are exosomes?

“Exosomes are essentially microscopic, membrane-bound packages that cells release as a means of communicating with one another,” said board-certified dermatologist [Dr. Rachel Westbay](#). “These packages carry signaling molecules such as proteins, lipids and different forms of RNA (ribonucleic acid), that influence how neighboring cells behave — including processes involved in inflammation, tissue repair and regeneration.” Board-certified dermatologist [Dr. Christina Marcelus](#) compares the whole process to the body's own mail system.

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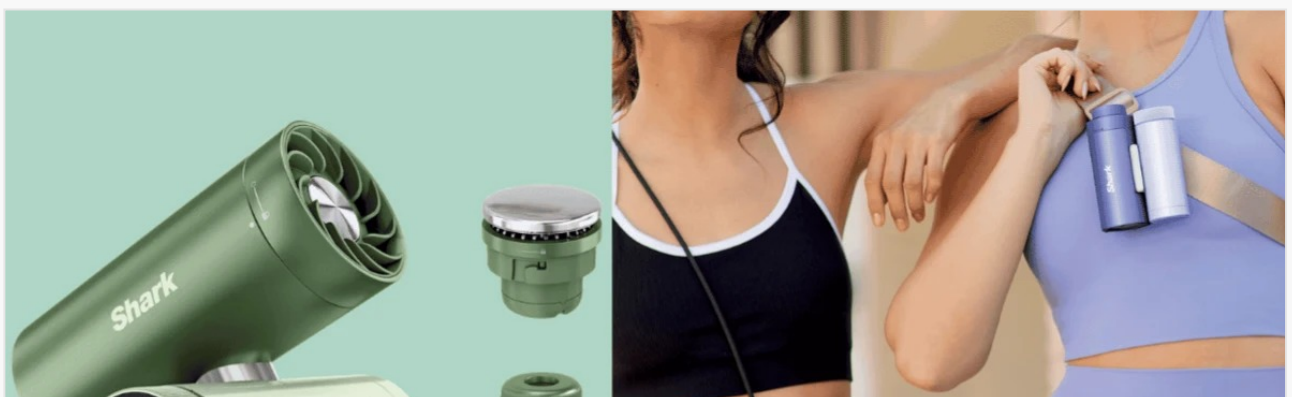
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So, why all the hype? “Most skin care works on the surface — retinol, antioxidants [and peptides](#) are all useful, but they basically nudge your skin cells from the outside, and they can only reach so deep,” Marcelus said. This is great for upkeep, but isn’t necessarily rebuilding your skin from within. “Exosomes are different,” she said. “Instead of tapping on a cell’s door with a single message, they hand the cell a whole set of instructions at once, allowing them to do a lot more.”

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How are exosomes being used in skin care?

Currently, exosomes are most commonly used in professional settings after procedures such as microneedling, fractional laser resurfacing or radiofrequency treatments, “where they may help calm inflammation and support the skin’s natural healing process,” double board-certified dermatologist [Dr. Kristina Collins](#) said.

When it comes to skin care products, they’re commonly found in topical serums intended to support the appearance of smoother, calmer and more resilient skin, according to double board-certified dermatologist [Dr. Whitney Hovenic](#). Our experts stressed, however, that these products have less robust clinical evidence than in-office applications.



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What are the benefits of exosomes in skin care?

Stem cells, growth factors and exosomes all exist on a new frontier of biotech-based beauty, and you’ll likely be hearing more about each as the industry keeps innovating. These elements all address a different part of cellular repair. “Exosomes are the most active part of that,” Marcelus said. “Using [exosomes] instead of living cells also sidesteps a lot of the old risks, like rejection and unpredictable batches, so they’re more stable and easier to work with [than stem cells].” The excitement around exosomes is also due to the range of potential benefits. “The same basic biology shows up across a lot of different concerns,” Marcelus said. Those include “sun damage and aging, [dark spots](#) and uneven tone, scars and wound healing, [thinning hair](#), even strengthening the skin barrier.”

One thing to note — “exosome” as an ingredient is used fairly loosely in the skin care industry, according to Hovenic. Some formulas contain exosomes derived from human stem cells, while others may contain plant-derived exosomes or even just exosome-inspired ingredients. From a scientific standpoint, the source and characterization of the exosomes matter, especially because the overall research around this technology is still very much in development. “Early clinical studies are encouraging and suggest improvements in wrinkles, skin texture, pigmentation and overall skin quality, but most have been relatively small and many were manufacturer-sponsored — so while the field is exciting, we’re still in the early chapters,” board-certified dermatologist [Dr. Kseniya Kobets](#) said.

Best exosome skin care products

[Plated Daily Serum](#)



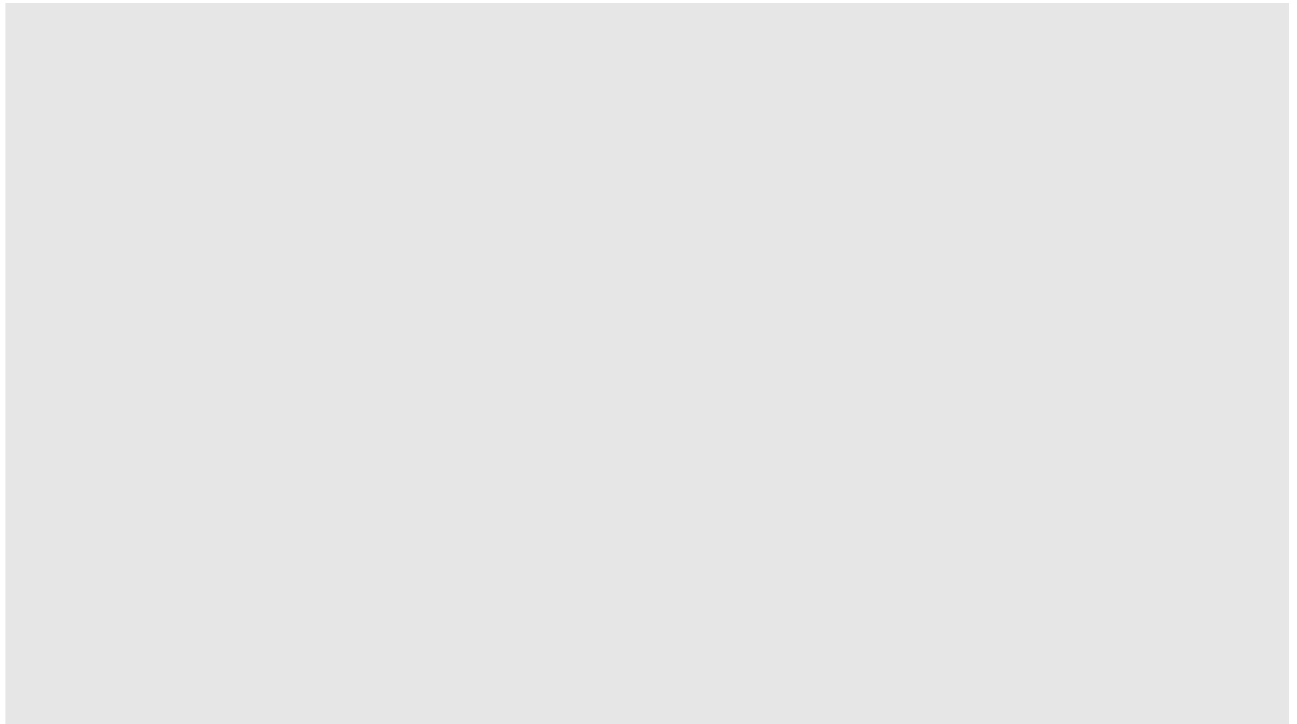
Plated Skin Science

\$258 at Plated

“If you’re brand-new to exosome skin care, this is a great option because it’s formulated for everyday use and pairs well with a simple skin care routine,” board-certified dermatologist [Dr. Ohara Aivaz](#) said. Also recommended by Westbay and board-certified dermatologist [Dr. Amanda Hill](#), the serum contains glycerin for moisture, a blend of peptides and 7.5 billion exosomes per pump. “Platelets are our bodies’ first responders to wound healing, which means platelet-derived exosomes send signals of repair and

regeneration,” Hill said. They are, in her words, the most obvious choice when it comes to skin care — and Plated is the only brand creating platelet-derived exosome topical products on the market at the moment. “I especially like this for patients who are more focused on maintaining healthy-looking skin than aggressively targeting advanced photodamage,” Westbay said. “As with any expensive serum, consistency matters more than intermittently applying a large amount,” she said.

[Skinfix Exo + Ectoin Intensive Repair Baume](#)



Skinfix

\$69 at Skinfix

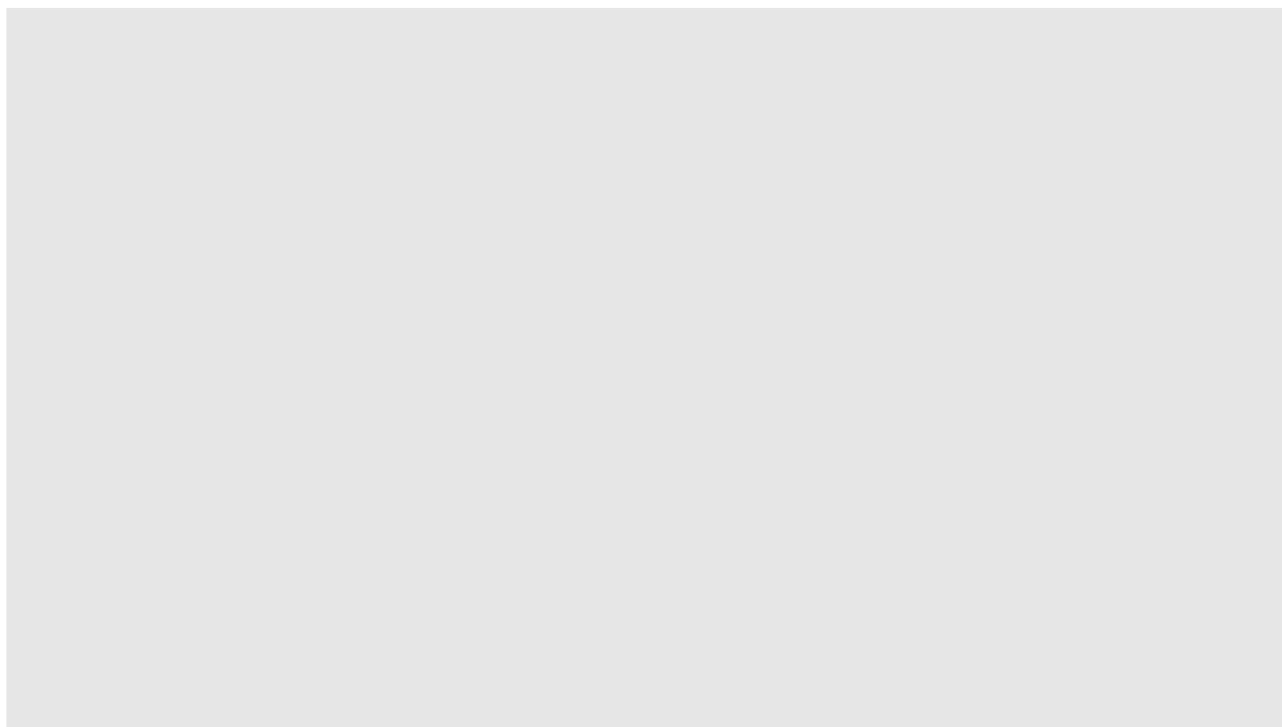
\$69 at Sephora

This balm features biomimetic exosomes (meaning they're engineered to mimic the function of cell-derived exosomes) and [hydrating ectoin](#) for anti-aging benefits. “I recommend this for patients with dry, sensitive or depleted skin who want visible smoothing benefits without introducing another potentially irritating active ingredient,” Hovenic said. “The rich, retinol-free formula is especially helpful when the skin barrier needs additional hydration and support.”

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AnteAge Pro System Serum



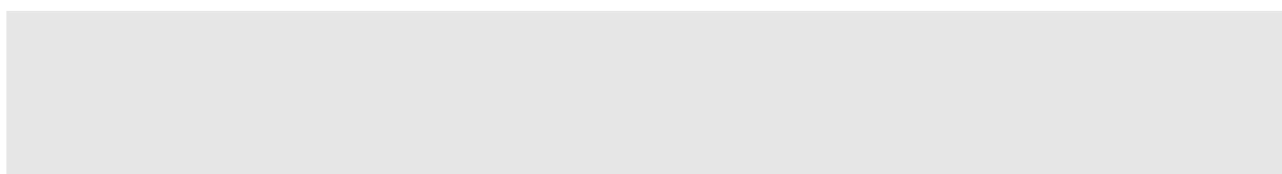
AnteAGE

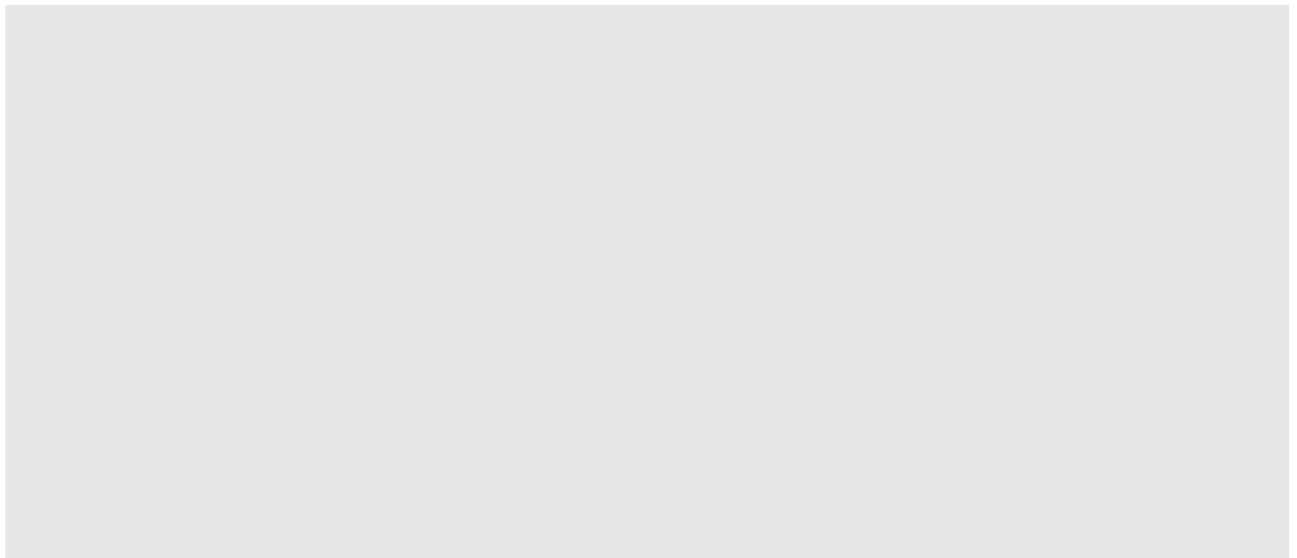
\$220 at AnteAGE

Collins recommends this system for those looking to improve texture, firmness and overall skin quality, noting that it layers well with other evidence-based ingredients like antioxidants and sunscreen. “I appreciate products that take a multipronged approach to supporting collagen production and improving skin texture, and this serum combines exosome-related technology with growth factors and other regenerative ingredients for optimal effectiveness,” Aivaz said. Board-certified dermatologist [Dr. Azadeh Shirazi](#) loves using this as an in-office topical treatment after procedures like lasering or microneedling because the active ingredients are mixed into the serum base separately, so they stay fresh and effective.

Editor Favorite

Plated Body Serum





Plated

\$338 at Plated Skin Science

While Plated's products are expensive, we have first-hand experience that shows they may be worth the investment. Several CNN Underscored editors have been testing this exosome-infused body serum, which targets crepey skin, increases firmness and smooths out discoloration. We like its quick-absorbing consistency and that one pump covers a fairly large area. After two weeks of consistent use on her neck and chest, CNN Underscored money writer [Robin Rothstein](#) saw fewer wrinkles in those areas. "While the product didn't magically erase 10 years off my neck overnight, there was a noticeable softening of lines and a bit more firmness," she said. "In fact, other people spotted the difference before I did. Now that I see it too, I'm convinced that with continued use, this serum just might shave off 10 years after all."

[The Inkey List Exosome Hydro-Glow Complex Serum](#)





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**\$24 at
Amazon**

**\$24 at
Sephora**

**\$24 at Ulta
Beauty**

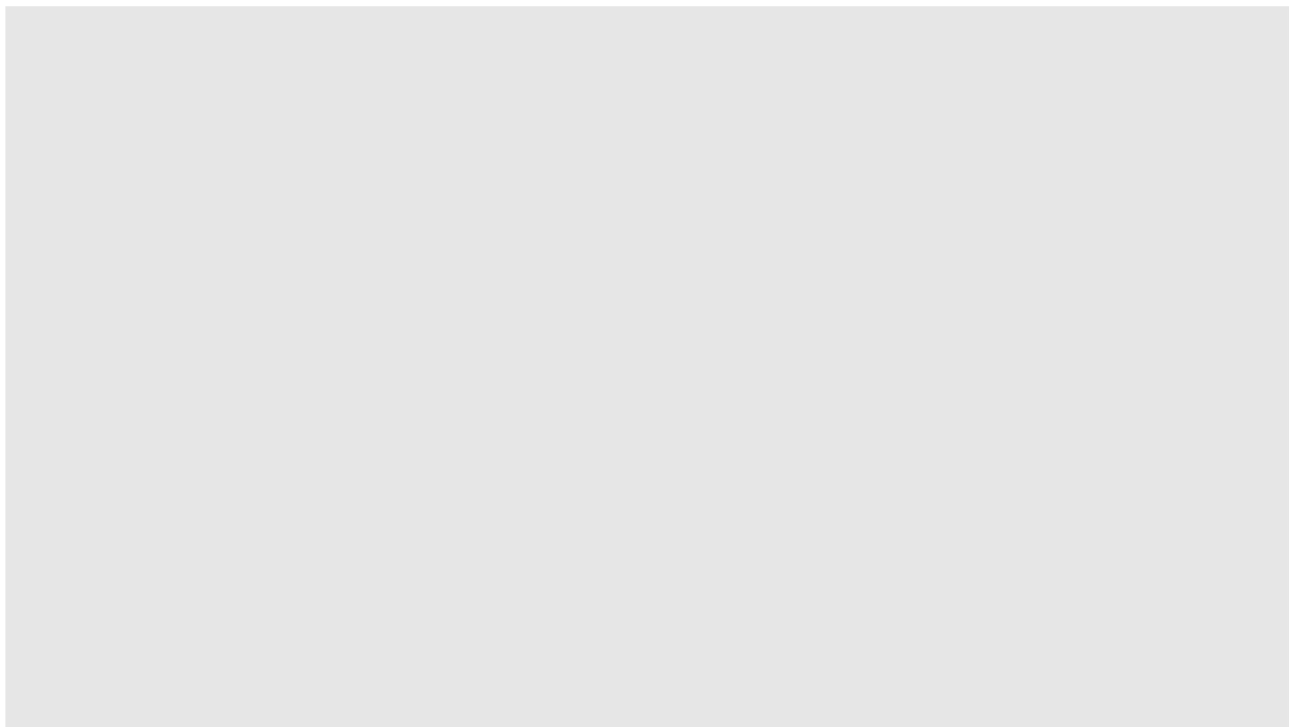
**\$24 at The
Inkey List**

For a more accessible starting point for those curious about exosome skin care, this option, which uses plant-based exosomes, is Hovenic’s recommendation. “It’s gentle and easy to incorporate into an existing routine, and [it’s] particularly well suited for dull or dehydrated skin,” she said.

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[Elevai Enfinity Exosome Daily Serum](#)

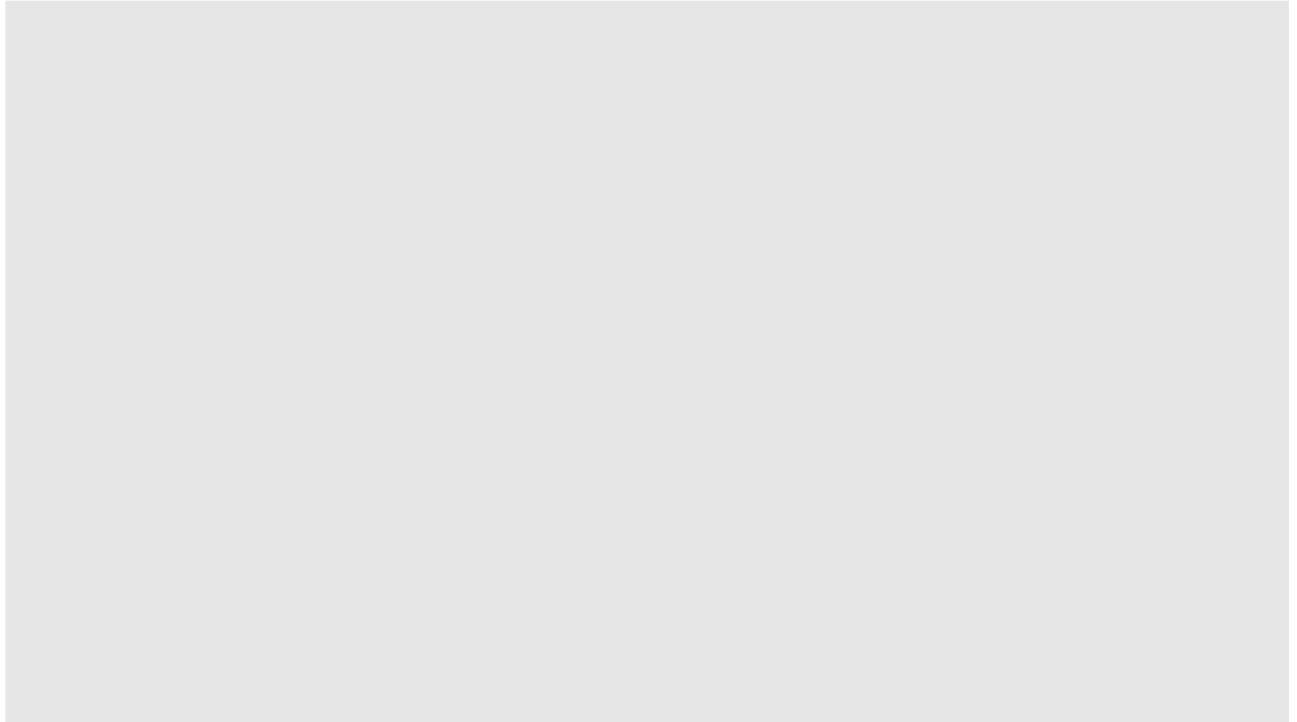


Elevai

\$299 at Elevai Skincare

“This serum uses exosome technology in a formula designed to support hydration, barrier strength and redness,” Shirazi said. She likes that it’s easy to layer and use consistently, which is key to actually reaping the benefits from your skin care. “It’s a nice option for patients looking for a gentle regenerative serum that can fit into a daily skin care routine,” Collins added.

Plated Intense Serum

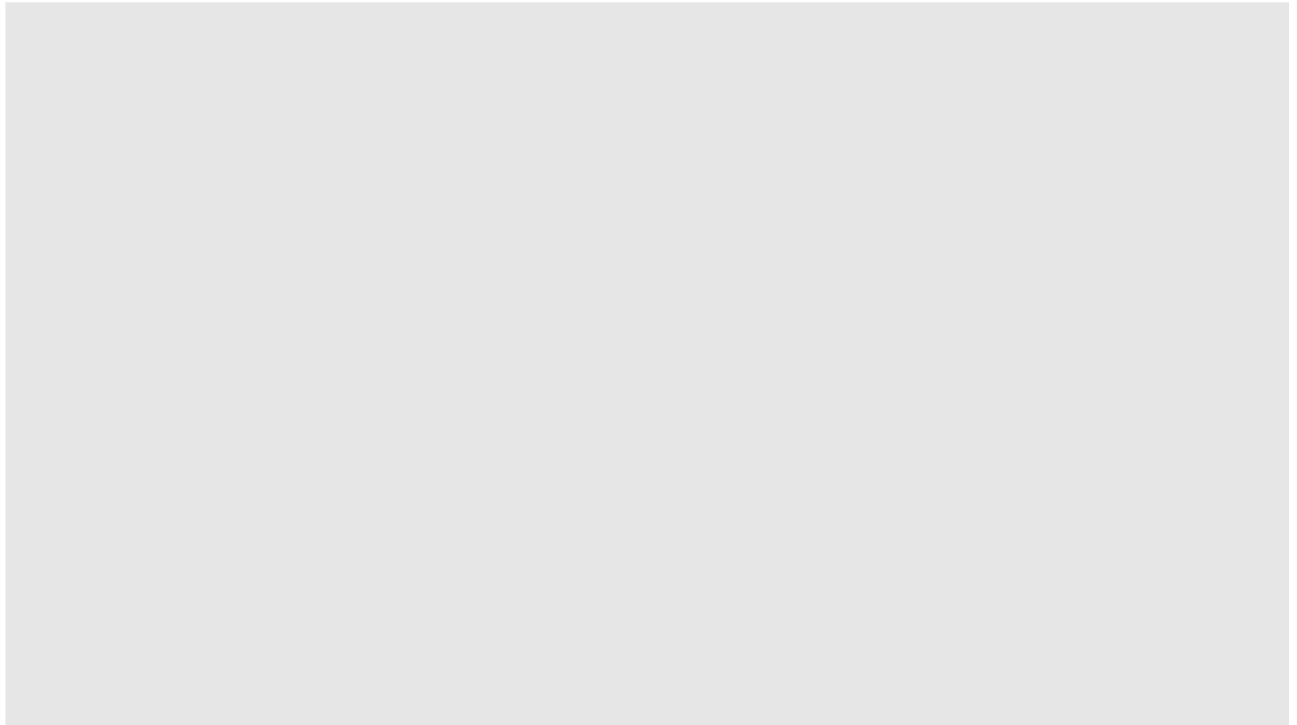


Plated

\$258 at Plated Skin Science

“This is probably my first choice for a patient who is specifically looking to invest in an exosome-focused [anti-aging product](#),” Westbay said. “It contains [Plated’s] highest concentration of platelet-derived exosomes — marketed as more than one trillion per bottle — and is designed to address visible photodamage, uneven tone, texture and loss of luminosity.” Both she, Hill, Aivaz and Collins appreciate the company’s investment in clinical research and focus on consistency and manufacturing quality. “I typically recommend applying it to clean, dry skin before other products and allowing it to absorb before layering,” Westbay said.

Dermalogica Phyto Nature E² Exosome + Exfoliation Serum



Sephora

**\$158 at
Sephora**

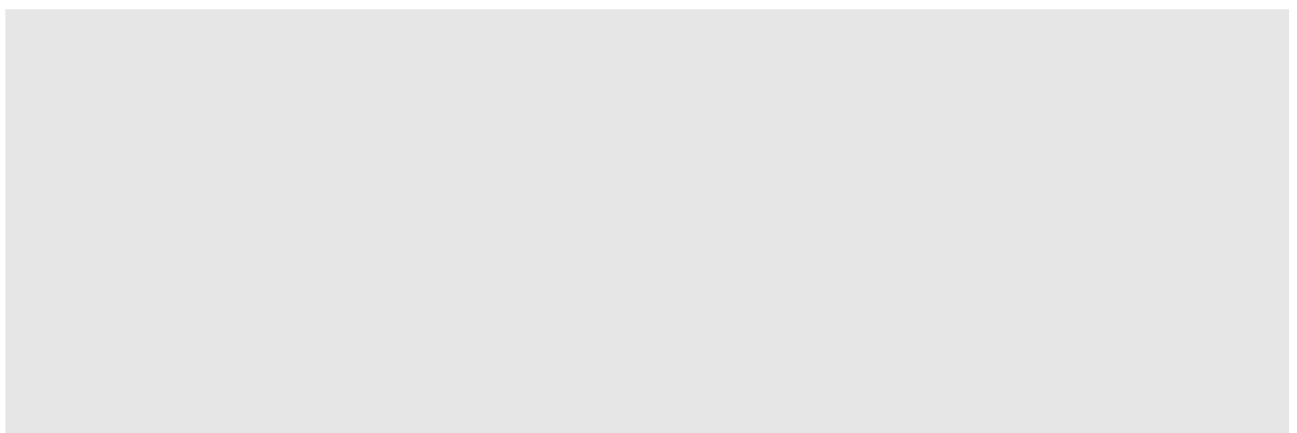
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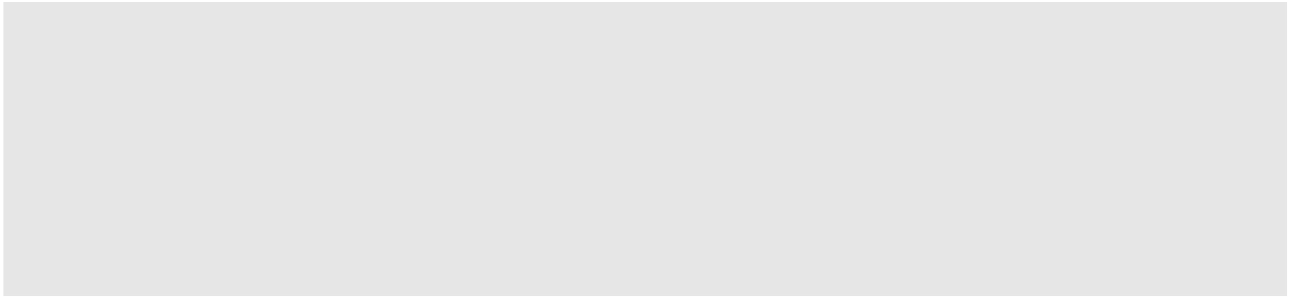
**\$158 at
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**\$158 at
Dermalogica**

Westbay recommends this serum, which “helps support the skin's natural barrier while also improving tone, texture and overall radiance over time.” The formulation combines two antioxidants — phytoene and phytofluene — which help defend skin against environmental stressors that contribute to early aging, she said. CNN Underscored fashion and beauty editor [Sophie Shaw](#) also called out the gentle exfoliation this serum provides, noting that it had a brightening effect on her skin.

Invo Aesthetics Rejuvenating Complex Serum

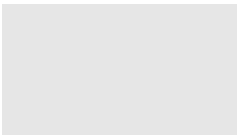




INVO Aesthetics

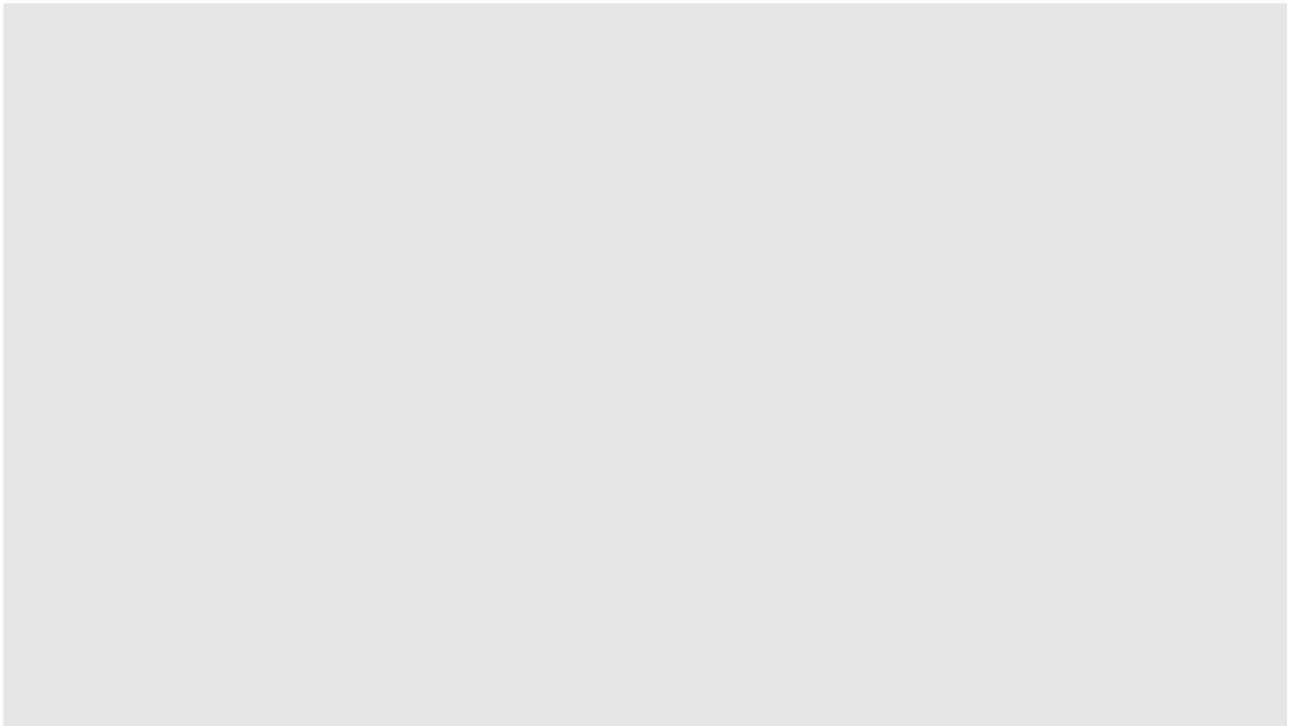
\$285 at INVO Aesthetics

This all-in-one anti-aging serum truly does it all, according to Hovenic. It increases the efficacy of your entire skin care routine by improving cellular function, rejuvenation and providing antioxidant protection. It’s designed to also hydrate, boost skin firmness and elasticity, and support both collagen and elastin production, she said.



RELATED ARTICLE
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Calecim Multi-Action Cream



Calecim

\$200 at Calecim

This product comes up constantly amongst dermatologists, according to Marcelus, who describes it as one of the better-studied topical exosome skin care products on the market. “Its exosomes come from an ethically sourced stem cell line, and the cream is stable and concentrated,” she said. “I especially like it for helping skin recover after a procedure, and the brand has actually [published data](#) showing improvements in texture, fine lines and hydration.”

[Medicube One Day Exosome Shot 2000 Serum](#)



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~~\$39~~ \$20 at
Amazon

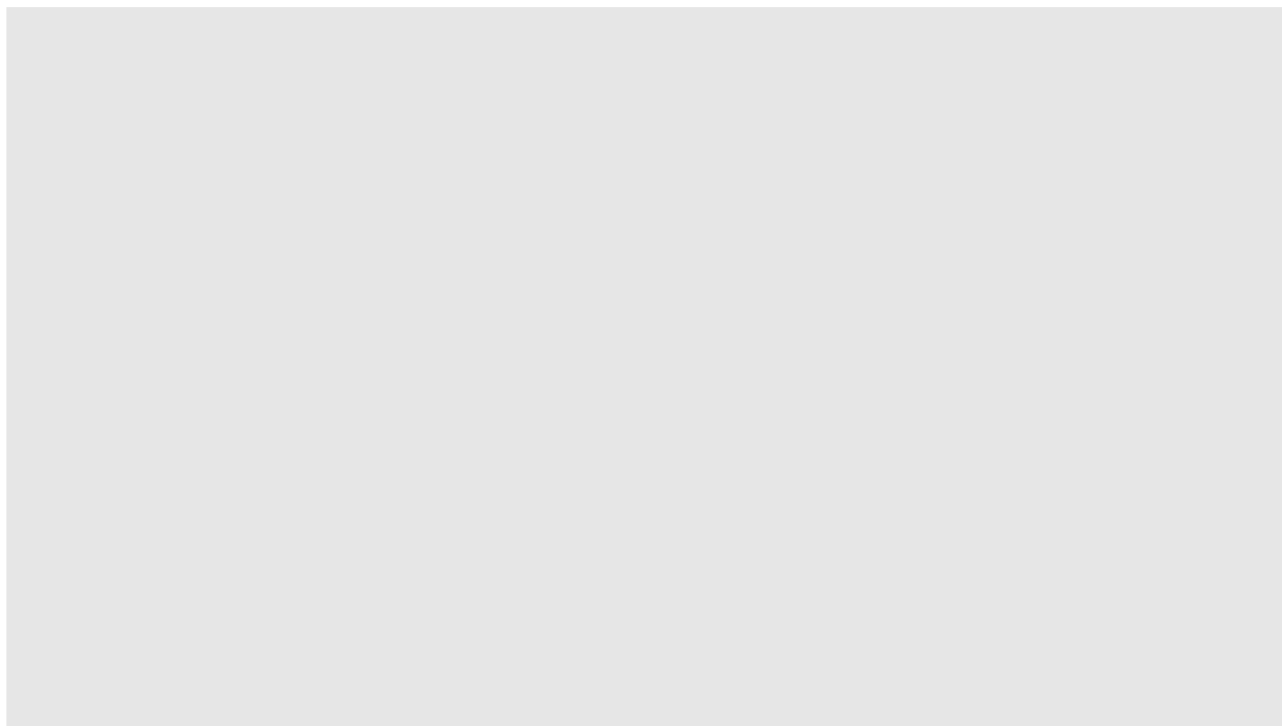
\$24 at
Walmart

\$24 at Ulta
Beauty

\$25 at
Nordstrom

A super-accessible option from the popular Korean-beauty brand Medicube, this serum is recommended by Hovenic for those targeting rough skin texture, congestion and the appearance of enlarged pores. The formulation features [exosome-coated spicules](#), which deliver the benefits of exosomes along with other hydrating ingredients to deeper layers of your skin. “It is best introduced gradually, as the microspicule formula can feel stimulating and may not be suitable for highly sensitive or reactive skin,” Hovenic said.

Plated Eye Serum



Plated

\$138 at Plated Skin Science

“The eye area is often one of the first places patients notice fine lines, crepey texture and signs of fatigue,” Hovenic said. She recommends this eye serum for targeting several of those concerns. It’s also a good option for those who can’t tolerate stronger ingredients, such as retinoids, around the eyes. All Plated products feature the same base of human platelet extract, or HPE, Hil said. How they vary is in the concentration of HPE as well as the other supporting ingredients used. This eye cream also includes “hyaluronic acid for hydration, caffeine to reduce puffiness and seaweed extract to improve under-eye discoloration,” Hill said. “The cooling metal applicator tip helps dispense the product and assist lymphatic drainage.”

Exochemicals Exo Face Perfection Moisturizer





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Amazon

~~\$149~~ **\$112 at**
Nordstrom

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Neiman
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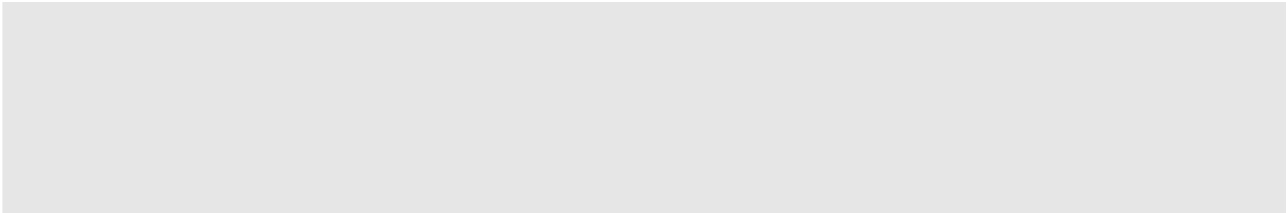
\$149 at
Exoceuticals

Shaw vouches for this moisturizer and other products from Exoceuticals, a skin care line centered around exosome technology. The brand uses its proprietary Xo3 Exosomes in each of its products, which are [manufactured in FDA-registered facilities](#). The potent exosomes are derived from human stem cells, which have [regenerative properties](#) according to studies, but rest assured, there is no human DNA in the formulas. This moisturizer in particular has a lightweight yet rich feel that Shaw said is great for everyday use.

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[Defenage 8-in-1 BioSerum](#)

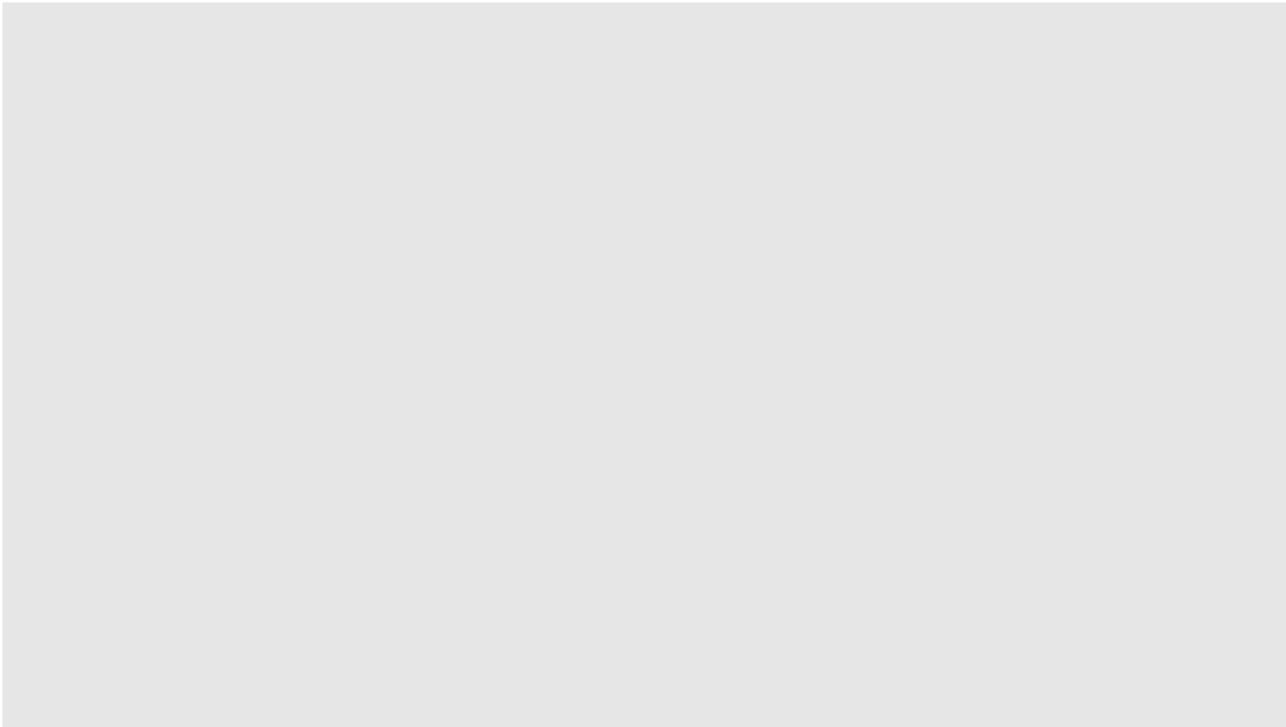


Defenage

\$198 at Defenage

Aivaz recommends this multiuse serum for those in search of an all-in-one anti-aging skin care product. In addition to supporting the skin's natural renewal process, it targets multiple signs of aging, including fine lines, wrinkles, uneven tone and loss of firmness, according to the dermatologist.

Benev ASCEplus Exobalm



Rajani MD

\$160 at Rajani MD

“This is commonly used in dermatology and aesthetic practices as part of postprocedure recovery,” Collins said. “It helps soothe the skin, reduce visible redness and support the healing process after treatments such as lasers or microneedling.” She likes that the balm is specifically formulated for compromised skin, when skin barrier

repair is critical.

FAQs

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Are exosomes worth it in skin care? ✓

How are exosomes different from retinol? ✓

Are exosomes better than PDRN? ✓

Who should try exosome skin care? ✓

Are exosomes good for hair loss? ✓

Meet our experts

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

- [Dr. Ohara Aivaz](#), double board-certified dermatologist and [Live Conscious](#) advisor
- [Dr. Kristina Collins](#), double board-certified dermatologist and founder of [Austin Skin](#)
- [Dr. Amanda Hill](#), double board-certified dermatologist
- [Dr. Whitney Hovenic](#), cofounder of the sunscreen brand [Spoooge](#) and a [board-certified dermatologist](#) and Mohs surgeon based in Reno, NV
- [Dr. Kseniya Kobets](#), board-certified dermatologist and director of cosmetic dermatology at [Montefiore Einstein Advanced Care Cosmetic Dermatology Center](#)
- [Dr. Christina Marcelus](#), board-certified dermatologist at [Honeydew](#)
- [Dr. Azadeh Shirazi](#), board-certified dermatologist specializing in cosmetic, surgical and medical dermatology
- [Dr. Rachel Westbay](#), board-certified dermatologist at [Marmur Medical](#)

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For this article, contributing writer [Noelle Ike](#) consulted expert dermatologists on exosome and exosome skin care products they recommend. She's previously covered [salmon sperm or PDRN skin care](#), [urea skin care](#) and [spicule skin care](#).

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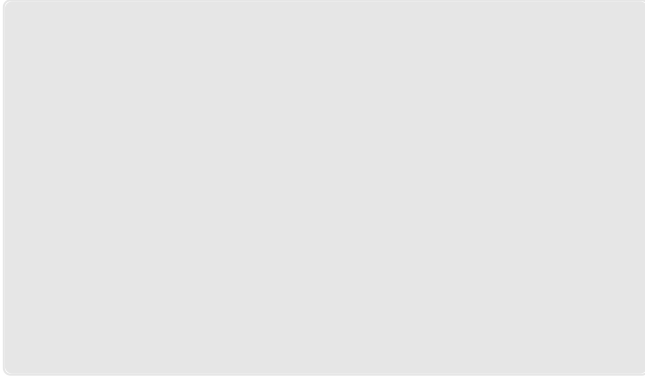
[Noelle Ike](#) is an editor and writer based in NYC, covering everything from fashion guides to beauty trends and gift guides. She joined CNN Underscored as an intern in 2018, as an editorial coordinator in 2019, and has been supporting the team as a contributing writer since 2020.

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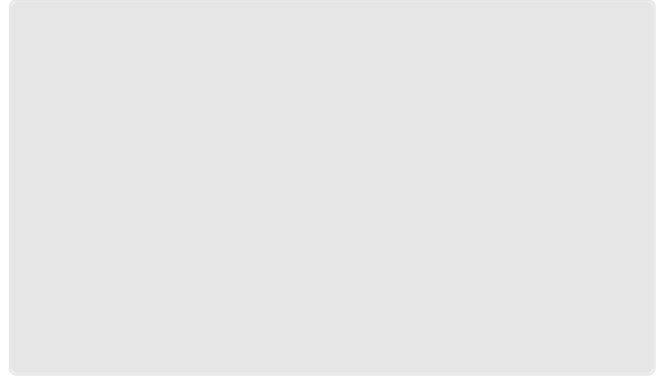
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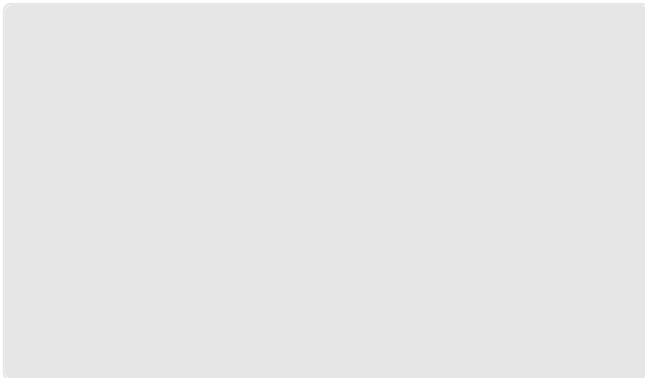
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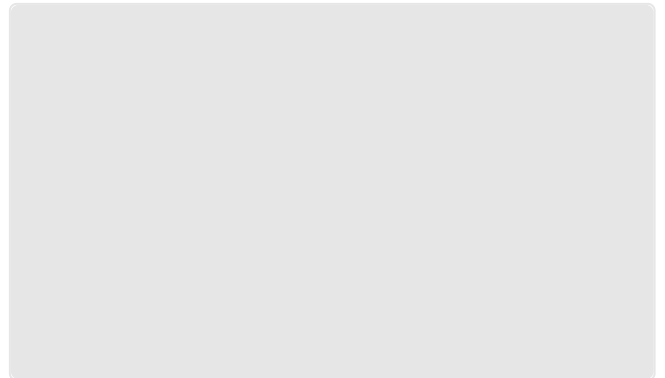
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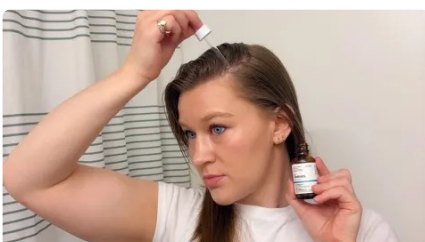
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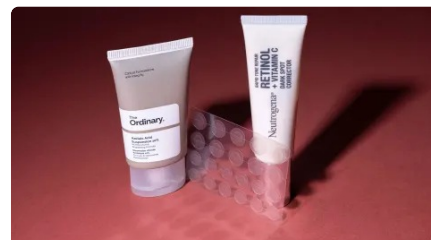
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