

Snail Slime Is K-Beauty's Secret to a Clear Complexion, and It's Dermatologist-Approved

People have been using it since 400 B.C.
Merissa Principe Oct 07, 2020



People do lots of strange things in the name of beauty, but slathering snail slime, or snail mucin, on our faces might be one of the strangest. Yes, you heard that right—but don't call it crazy just yet. Snail mucin has been a trending skincare ingredient in South Korea for the past few years, and it's been making its way into the U.S. market, too.

Snail facials date as far back as 400 B.C., so while you may know snails as a backyard nuisance, they have serious beautifying powers, too. Snail mucin has serious anti-aging and anti-acne properties and helps make skin super soft, too. But is putting snail slime on our faces really worth it? To get answers, we tapped four skincare experts to ask them all our slimy questions.

What are the origins of snail skin care?

Before the modern creams, serums, and face masks existed, the only way to benefit from snail mucin was to allow snails to crawl over your face. In fact, it's reported that Hippocrates from ancient Greece crushed snails and sour milk (the OG lactic acid) as a cure for skin inflammation. Thankfully, now people can turn to skincare products to get their slimy fix.

How is snail mucin sourced?

Most of the snail mucin used in skincare products is from garden snails, and don't worry, they're not harmed in the extraction process. The most popular technique consists of placing snails in a dark, quiet room (as nocturnal creatures, snails prefer this environment) on top of a mesh sheet. As they crawl around, the mucin drips through the mesh and onto a tray below, which is where the mucin is collected. Once it's there, it can then be processed to properly stabilize the skincare product and make it suitable for cosmetic use.

"The snails are safely sourced and are not harmed during the process," assures Charlotte Cho, an esthetician and cofounder of Soko Glam. Animal testing is illegal in South Korea, so Cho explains that each manufacturer creates an environment that's comfortable for the snails and allows them to have enough rest to optimize mucin production.

What are the benefits of using snail mucin?

In nature, snails can heal quickly as they travel over various surfaces and terrain, so it's no surprise that snail mucin naturally contains antimicrobials. These are beneficial because they help reduce inflammation, skin irritations, and diminish the appearance of redness.

"Snail mucin also contains specific growth factors," says [board-certified dermatologist Joel L. Cohen, M.D.](#), explaining that it's been known to help support natural cell regeneration and heal wounds. This is just one of a few reasons it's so great for acne-prone skin, although all of our experts confirmed that snail mucin is beneficial for all skin types.

Additionally, snail mucin is a powerful anti-aging ingredient, too. As we age, our skin begins to lose its ability to retain moisture and firmness, and what makes snail mucin so great is that it contains natural hyaluronic acid which pulls in and retains moisture, hydrates, and plumps the skin for a dewy glow. Plus, it contains peptides, tiny amino acid particles that are the building blocks for collagen formation that makes skin look plumper.

"When these tiny amino acid chains link together, they become a protein. The most important protein in the skin is collagen," explains board-certified dermatologist Michele Green, M.D. Collagen is what gives the skin its resilience and structure. So when these two ingredients work together, they firm, plump, and hydrate the skin to achieve that youthful, healthy glow.

What should you look for in snail skin care?

Dr. Green suggests looking for products that contain more than 80% snail secretion filtrate (mucin) so that you can reap all of the fantastic benefits it has to offer. An effective snail mucin product should also be combined with other natural ingredients, such as antioxidants or retinol, as well as common skincare staples, like vitamin C.



Biopelle Radiance Eye Cream

[Dr. Cohen's](#) favorite skincare brand is Biopelle, and he says that his patients can't stop raving about this tinted eye cream that rejuvenates tired-looking eyes and conceals dark circles. With the added benefits of snail mucin, squalane, and peptides, this eye cream firms, reduces the appearance of fine lines, and brightens dark circles. If you ask us, it's worth the investment for all of the benefits this cream provides.