

Skin Care- Acid Mantle Is The Main factor - Part 1

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Skin care does not only mean keeping skin clean, using skin care products, applying cosmetics, avoiding sun and getting surgery done for skin blemishes. Acid mantle of the skin plays a major role in protection of skin and must be understood for better skin care. Let us find out more about what is acid mantle and what role it plays in skin care.

What is acid mantle?

Skin has a protective layer of acidic oils on it, called the acid mantle. This protective layer is found all over the skin. Acid mantle is a mixture of sweat and sebum. Disturbing this acidic mantle may cause many problems. That is why, we hear so much about pH balanced products. Acid mantle-

1. Hydrates the skin and protects it from drying.
2. Protects skin against harmful bacteria. Bacteria do not survive in the acidic mixture and therefore cannot cause infection in the skin.

How acid mantle is destroyed?

If you strip the skin of its acidic mantle by using strong alkaline soaps/cleansers, bacteria will find it easy to attack the skin. Moreover removing the acid mantle disturbs the distribution of dead cells on top of epidermis. This is called stratum corneum. The structure of cells in the dead skin cells layer gets disturbed and the bacteria find an easy passage through to the epidermis. Normally these dead cells protect the skin against such damages. The skin is a miracle. These dead cells if allowed to accumulate will make the skin look very bad, but if totally removed, the skin is left defenseless to an extent. We have to arrive at a fine balance in maintenance of the skin. In the next part we will discuss about how to protect acid mantle.

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Skin Care- Acid Mantle Is The Main factor - Part 2

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In the first part of this article we discussed basic facts about acid mantle. We understood that skin has a protective layer of acidic oils on it, called the acid mantle. This protective layer is found all over the skin. Acid mantle is a mixture of sweat and sebum. Disturbing this acidic mantle may cause many problems. That is why, we hear so much about pH balanced products. The normal skin pH is 4 to 5.5, so it is acidic. Do you know about pH?

What Is pH?

pH measures acidity or alkalinity of any product. Water is neutral and has a pH of 7. Acids have pH below 7 and alkalis have pH greater than 7 up to 14. The pH of any product will be between 1 and 14. If it is acidic, its pH will be less than 7. If it is basic/alkaline, its pH will be between 7 and 14. The lower the pH of an acid the stronger it is and the higher the pH of an alkali, the stronger it is. For example, you have two alkaline solutions, one with a pH of 8 and other with a pH of 9. The solution with a pH of 9 will be stronger than that of pH 8. Similarly if you have two acids-one with a pH of 2 and other with pH of 3, the acid of pH 2 will be stronger than the acid of pH 3.

To maintain the acid mantle your cleanser should have pH of between 4.to 5.5 or it should have pH of 7. If you use any product with pH higher than 7, it will destroy the acid mantle. You can always measure the pH with litmus paper. Many manufacturers write the pH of the product on the pack.

How to maintain acid mantle?

1. Avoid using harsh soaps and cleansers.
2. Moisturize skin frequently with a slightly acidic moisturizer.
3. Protect yourself from the sun.
4. Use pH balanced skin care products.

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