

Everything You Need to Know About Succinic Acid

We spoke with a dermatologist about the key ingredient that can combat acne.



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If you're already acquainted with glycolic acid, salicylic acid, and benzoyl peroxide, you may have also come across succinic acid. This ingredient is versatile and can effectively work for all skin types, making it a common ingredient in skincare products that aim to combat acne.

If you're curious to learn more about the acid, we spoke with **Dr. Jody Alpert Levine**, a New York Dermatologist at Plastic Surgery & Dermatology of NYC, who breaks down what succinic acid is, and its benefits for the skin, below.

What is succinic acid?

"Succinic acid is a type of antimicrobial facial acid with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties that helps regulate acidity and sebum production, limiting acne breakouts," Levine tells ESSENCE. "Succinic acids help reduce the growth of bacteria and control inflammation, making them particularly effective for treating acne lesions, blackheads, and other blemishes."

Which skin type is it best for?

Succinic acid is effective for various skin types, including acne-prone and sensitive skin. However, Levine recommends consulting with your dermatologist to determine if specific products with succinic acid are suitable for your skin type.

What are the benefits?

Succinic acid can help clear and brighten your skin, leaving a refreshed appearance. Succinic acid prevents the growth of bacteria and fungi on the skin without causing irritation. Furthermore, it has hydrating properties that can help keep your skin healthy and moisturized without exfoliating it.

What are the best practices?

Along with succinic acid, Levine also recommends using products containing hyaluronic acid, retinoids, sulfur, and salicylic acid as they can combat acne and have anti-inflammatory properties. “They aim to control oil production, control inflammation and the growth of bacteria, all of which are important for treating acne and maintaining healthy skin.”

Which products should I use?

01 ELEMIS Pro-Collagen Energising Marine Cleanser



The cleanser contains succinic and lactic acids that help to break down dead skin cells and improve skin moisture levels.

02 Cetaphil Gentle Clear Triple-Action Acne Treatment Serum



This dermatologist-tested gel serum is also infused with salicylic acid and PHA to boost hydration and clear skin.

03 Perricone MD Acne Relief Calming Treatment Hydrator



This treatment is specifically designed for sensitive skin and provides a two-step process of gentle hydration while also removing bacteria.