



SUN-KISSED AND MELANIN-RICH

A SKIN CARE GUIDE
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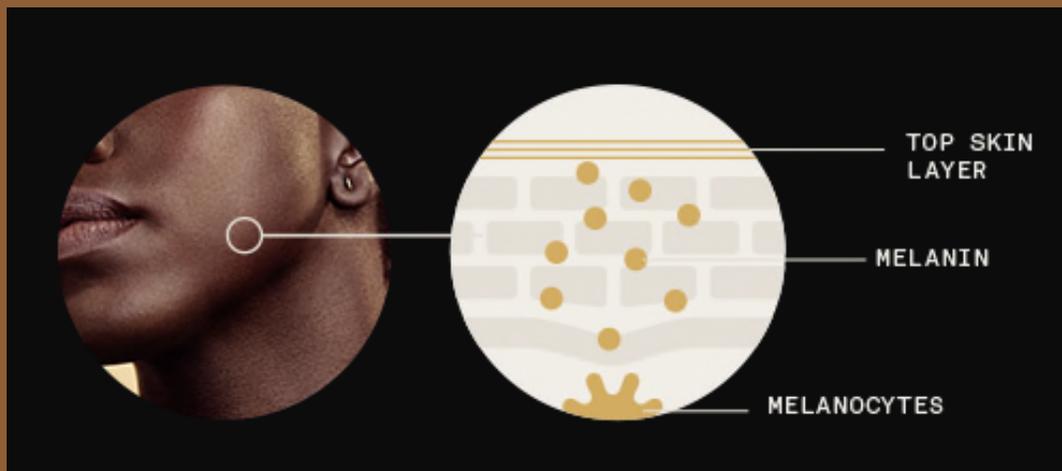


BROWN SKIN IS SPECIAL

"The blacker the berry, the sweeter the juice." ★

From light olive brown to mahogany to ebony and everything in between, the shades of brown skin are numerous. This is all thanks to melanin!

Melanin comes from melanocytes in our skin. No matter what skin color, every single one of us has essentially the same number of melanocytes. But, the type and amount of melanin that the melanocytes makes is what determines your skin color. The richer you are with melanin, the darker your skin. Melanin also helps determine the color of your hair and eye color!



BROWN SKIN IS A BLESSING

"Brown skin girl, your skin just like pearls. The best thing in the world. I never trade you for anybody else." - Beyoncé ★

Your melanin-rich qualities are powerful beyond making you look good.

Melanin protects cells that produce collagen. Collagen is your body's most abundant protein. It helps hold your body together including giving your skin structure and a natural glow. More melanin means more collagen and more healthy skin.

Melanin also works as an antioxidant. This means that it helps block free radicals, particularly from the sun, from causing damage or illness to your body.

Melanin preserves skin cell DNA, preventing age spots and wrinkles. This keeps you looking young and fresh even as you age!

BROWN SKIN IS PRECIOUS

"I'll tell you what you should do when you get up in the morning: look yourself in the mirror and say, 'I love me!'" - Erica and Tina Campbell



Our melanin is every good thing, but we cannot take it for granted. We must take pride in our brown skin by caring for it well.

In the same way that your shade of brown is unique to you, so is your skin type! Two different people with similar shades of skin color may need different care because of their skin type. Here are three examples of skin types:

Oily Skin

The skin secretes natural oils to help keep itself moisturized. Clearly visible pores, a glossy shine, and frequent acne breakouts are common with this skin type. Oily skin DOES NOT mean hydration is not needed.

Dry Skin

This skin type may feel rough, be prone to itching, and need extra, extra hydration to show its radiance. This skin type does not produce enough of what it needs to retain moisture and strengthen the skin's protective shield.

Combination Skin

A mix of oily spots (typically around the nose and eyes, aka the "T" zone) and dry spots (typically on the cheeks and around the mouth). It is also particularly common for this skin type to have pronounced change with the seasons (oily in the summer, dry in the winter).

There are some characteristics of your skin you'll know right away, and others you'll learn over time. The more you learn about your skin, the better you'll be able to care for it. For example, finding a key word like **non-comedogenic** on a product is good for all of us, but *especially* for people with oily skin type. Or, you may realize you need a oil-based cream for ultra-hydration (dry skin) rather than a water-based lotion (oily skin). You'll want to get the right products and establish routines to keep your skin healthy. As you choose the right fit product, <https://www.ewg.org/skindeep> is a website that can also help you determine how safe it is!

As a starting point, it may be helpful to look into some ingredients that our melanin-rich skin generally tends to rely on including: **Shea Butter, oats, aloe vera, almond oil, jojoba oil, cocoa butter, and ceramides**. Prioritize vitamins (particularly **Vitamin E**) and avoid using synthetic fragrances, phthalates, parabens, sulfates, and alcohols that can irritate our skin. Consider researching and using these brands/products (baby, kid, and youth versions):



SheaMoisture



Aveeno



Aquaphor



Palmer's Cocoa Butter

You may also consider...

- Eucerin
- Cetaphil
- CeraVe
- Dove
- Vaseline Cocoa Radiant

As a general rule, melanin-rich skin of all types requires daily moisturizing from head to toe, especially right after bathing/showering to lock in water. Moisturizing daily with lotion or cream is essential to keeping the skin hydrated.



Another product you should be sure to have is **sunscreen**! Even though our melanin gives us *some* natural protection from the sun, we *must* use sunscreen to help fully keep our skin from being damaged. Consider your skin type and look for similar ingredients and brands listed above. There are also Black-made brands like **Black Girl Sunscreen** which includes Shea butter, aloe, jojoba seed oil, and eliminates the white residue of other sunscreens.



Something you may be aware of as you tend to your skin is **eczema**. Eczema is a skin condition that happens when the body's immune system overreacts to certain stimuli. The body defends itself from the stimuli by releasing chemicals that cause inflammation and itching. Eczema is common and treatable.

If you have eczema, you may experience flare-ups of painful itching, and you may have thick patches of dark brown, chalky grey, cracked, or bumpy skin that is different from your natural skin color and texture. For a lot of us, eczema happens on our neck, the inside of our elbow, our wrists, our ankles, or on the inside of our knees. Eczema is triggered and feels worse when in contact with excessive heat, pollen, grass, dust, smoke, irritating soaps or detergents, and some food allergies. When a flare-up happens, apply a cool washcloth to the skin and dab on an effective ointment (there are great **products for eczema relief** in the brands listed above). **Avoid itching** as much as possible to avoid further irritation and infection. **Other tips:** bathe daily for 5-10 minutes in lukewarm water (**avoid hot water**); pat instead of rub to wash and dry; **use a humidifier** to put moisture in the air and hydrate your skin; **check in with a physician**.

BROWN SKIN IS HONORABLE

"The Black skin is not a badge of shame but rather a glorious symbol of national greatness." -Marcus Garvey 

This is one of the most important parts of caring for your skin...

Acknowledge your skin color boldly. It matters who you are on the inside, but who you are on the outside is part of you too! It's something to be so proud of, and it makes you so good-looking that it can't be ignored! Speak positivity over your skin qualities. Use language that reminds you of the warmth and worth you carry in your skin color. When people make you feel that this isn't true, hold your head high and let the glow shine stronger. You are melanin-rich and that's a gift. A pure thing. Learn about your skin; nurture your skin; and celebrate all that it means to have the color you have!

Enjoy your skin care journey!

Here are some great resources to help you continue do this:

- **Brown Boy Joy** (Thomishia Booker)
- **I Am Every Good Thing** (Derrick Barnes)
- **Not Quite Snow White** (Ashley Franklin)
- **Sulwe** (Lupita Nyong'o)
 - or watch the author read it as a part of **Bookmarks** a series by Marley Dias
- **Black is a Rainbow Color** (Angela Joy)
- **The Skin I'm In** (Sharon G. Flake)
- **Blended** (Sharon M. Draper)
- **Piecing Me Together** (Renée Watson)
- **"Black Like Us"** (Blackish Season 5, Episode 10)
- **I Need You to Know: The ABC's of Black Girl Magic** (Lora McClain-Muhammad)
- **I Need You to Know: The ABC's of King's Greatness** (Lora McClain-Muhammad)

Shows and movies that exude and center the joy and excellence of brown skin like Motown Magic, Jingle Jangle, Cinderella with Brandy and Whitney Houston, Jump In!, Black Panther are also wonderful resources.

We become more comfortable in our skin when we talk about it, see it in stories, are surrounded by it in real life, color it in pictures, watch it on screen, hear from it music, and know its legacy!