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Test subjects: (From left) Rodan and Fields try products on themselves before doing clinical trials.

EXPERT TESTIMONY

DERMATOLOGISTS KATIE RODAN, MD, AND KATHY FIELDS, MD, TELL NING CHAO WHY LAST WEEKEND'S HOT SPELL AND LAST NIGHT'S DINNER AFFECT HOW YOU LOOK TODAY

If dermatologists Katie Rodan, MD, and Kathy Fields, MD, aren't instantly recognizable, imagine their faces on a flickering television screen at 4 A.M., when insomnia has led you to an infomercial marathon. Yes, they're the San Francisco doctors who created the superpopular Proactiv Solution skin-care line and wrote last spring's antibreakout bible *Unblemished* (Atria Books). More than just acne avengers, the duo is known for banishing brown spots, irritation, and wrinkles with the posh Rodan + Fields Multi-Med Therapy products, sold in department stores. This summer, they launch the Rodan + Fields Anti-Age regimen for firmer and smoother skin. "I call it the selfish line," Rodan says. "I just turned 50 and Kathy's 47, so we wanted to create something to fight our own not-so-fine lines."



Doctor's bag: (Clockwise from center) Rodan + Fields Anti-Age facial cream; Fields recommends using Rodan + Fields Reverse exfoliant cleanser to help erase fine lines: "Go to town around the lips"; According to Rodan, the gloss side of M.A.C Pro Longwear Lipcolour in For Keeps "stops lips from drying out"; Aveeno 1% Hydrocortisone Anti-Itch Cream can reduce redness in pimples; GoSMILE Daily teeth whitener

Your new Anti-Age facial cream contains sunscreen, but if 80 percent of sun damage occurs before age 18, isn't protection later in life a lost cause?

KATIE RODAN, MD: That old adage is untrue. The FDA found that only 23 percent of damage happens before your eighteenth birthday. Additional harm accumulates at a rate of 10 percent for every decade from then on, so it's never too late to start using sunscreen.

KATHY FIELDS, MD: The peptides in this cream build collagen to fill lines, but any improvement is destroyed if you don't apply SPF. Sunscreen is still the best wrinkle treatment on the market.

UV rays are also notorious for causing brown spots, right?

KR: Heat can produce skin-darkening melasma patches as well. A University of California, San Diego, study observed that Mexican tortilla makers working in dark rooms lit only by the light of the cooking fire developed melasma on their faces and forearms, which were closest to the flames. The condition has never been treated successfully with lasers. Now we know the heat that lasers produce could actually worsen the problem.

So how does one correct uneven skin tone?

KR: Forget spot treatment. You need to address the marks you see now and the ones that will appear later. That's why we recommend using our hydroquinone-based Reverse Skin Lightening Toner and Lotion over the entire face. And religious sunscreen application is the only way to stop freckles from developing. I tell my melasma patients to use physical UV blockers such as zinc or titanium dioxide—they reflect light and prevent the skin from heating.

Anything else women can do to improve their skin?

KF: Diet can also affect your complexion. Recent research from Harvard shows that eating dairy may cause acne. Since they suspect hormones to be the culprits, switching to hormone-free organic food and dairy could be a solution. If you do get a breakout, layer one percent hydrocortisone cream and benzoyl peroxide on pimples. It won't work as fast as an in-office steroid shot, but it will still help shrink spots.

If what we eat really has an impact on our face, should we all stock up on salmon fillets?

KF: Salmon is overrated. I've actually had mercury sickness myself—the risk of being poisoned by the fish far outweighs its anti-inflammatory benefits. Farmed salmon contains PCBs and dioxins, which are linked to breast cancer. Even wild varieties aren't completely safe. Polar bears have high mercury levels, and they're not eating farmed fish. Hair loss, concentration problems, upset stomachs—they're all signs of too much mercury.

KR: It's hard to tell if the fish you're buying is truly wild, so women should follow the FDA recommendation of no more than two servings of salmon per week.

Skin care and food all take time to have an effect. Are there any instant fixes?

KR: Whitening your teeth attracts more light to the face, which makes skin glow. I like GoSMILE ampules because they're portable.

KF: Stay positive. Chocolate cake makes me happy, so I eat it. And I love mineral-based foundations such as the one from Bare Escentuals. It looks extremely natural and doesn't cake into creases. □