

SUNDAY EDIT

How to Keep Your Skin Glowing All Holiday Long, According to Beauty Pros

Lindsay Tigar | November 30, 2022



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With many special celebrations, and excuses to get dressed up and join our friends and family, the holidays can be an exciting and — at times — exhausting time of year. All of the extra activities (and pressure) that comes with it can cause our skin to break out. Though pimples, dryness, and other conditions are always frustrating, it can be particularly cumbersome before your office party or gathering your family together for holiday photos. Luckily, we talked to the true experts who know how to maintain a beautiful glow year-round: dermatologists and makeup artists.

Here, a guide on how to attend all of your social calendar invites from now until New Year's — and keep your skin healthy, too:

What causes breakouts during the holiday season?

Many people report higher levels of skin conditions during the splendor of the holiday season, and there are many contributing factors. From what you sip and nibble on at a cocktail party to your bedtime routine, here are some culprits:



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Elevated stress levels

Though many tout it as the most wonderful time of year, historically, there is an uptick in unhappiness during the holidays, says Rachel Nazarian, MD, FAAD, a board-certified dermatologist. She explains this is often caused by sky-high expectations from family and the office, battling the crowds and anxiety of traveling, and financial stressors from gift-giving. “From a skin standpoint, the increased cortisol levels we experience when we are stressed send signals to our oil glands to rev up production, increasing the likelihood of acne breakouts,” she says.

Increased alcohol consumption

Even if you’re not someone who has a glass of wine with dinner each night, you may find yourself toasting more than usual during the holidays. And, while your diet may generally be healthy, we all tend to indulge when grandma is cooking up our favorite cookies. These diet changes play a role in how our skin behaves, Dr. Nazarian explains. She says high glycemic index foods eaten around the holidays have been shown to worsen acne breakouts. “Additionally, a more dehydrated lifestyle — often driven by an increase in alcoholic beverages — can also make skin appear drier, duller, and worsen overall skin appearance,” she adds.



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Frequent traveling

If your family and friends are scattered throughout the country — or world! — you may dread the annual trek to the airport. Not only do you battle increased crowds and frequent delays at the airport, but traveling isn't great news for your pores. "Traveling via dry/arid recirculated airplane air can throw our skin into a confused combination of dry, oily, and irritated. And that's before we throw in the additional complications if you fly wearing a mask," Dr. Nazarian says.

The shift in temperature

For most of us, the holidays are synonymous with chilly weather, hopefully with a picture-perfect snowfall during December. And even if we don't live in a freezing zip code, many of us choose to travel to winter wonderland areas. Dr. Nazarian says that when we're in cool and arid environments, our skin loses moisture, creating an increased risk of irritation, inflammation and acne.

Sleeping less and wearing more makeup

Another significant factor to end-of-year breakouts is the fact we sleep less while also wearing more makeup. After testing out if you can draw the cat eye and enjoying festive cocktails with your friends, you may be tempted to go to bed without washing your face. While we get the temptation, your skin won't be happy in the morning, warns Natasha Moor, a global makeup artist and the founder of Natasha Moor Cosmetics. "The problem comes when you don't take the time to remove your makeup completely every night," she shares. "Especially when you're wearing extra makeup, it's so important to double cleanse and hydrate your skin before falling asleep."

How to keep your skin glowing

There's a lot at play during the holiday season regarding our skin health. Though it may feel daunting and like blemishes are eminent, there is some hope. Here, the pros share their best strategies for maintaining optimal glow:



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Stay hydrated — inside and out

Even if you're sipping on hot tea instead of ice-cold water, Dr. Nazarian says it's essential to stay hydrated — inside and outside. First, she encourages increasing your water intake, especially if you're drinking more booze. And though it may seem counterintuitive when it's cold outside, she suggests also decreasing the shower temperature. "Hotter water can strip skin of natural moisturizers that can dry skin and increase irritation. Especially during cooler weather and especially when you're on an acne-fighting regimen which can already decrease oil production," she says.

Make sure to use a hydrating moisturizer, like Sunday Riley ICE Ceramide Moisturizing Cream, to keep your pores quenched and vibrant. After applying a generous layer, you can turn on a warm air humidifier to keep your skin extra hydrated, says **Kimberly Lee, M.D.**, a board-certified facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon. "It can help protect your skin from the dry cold air and retain moisture," she explains.

Try to maintain your wellness routine

You may stare in disbelief at your overflowing, double-booked calendar and wonder *how-in-the-world* you can maintain your wellness routine. And hey, that's okay — but sticking to as many norms in your schedule during the holidays can be beneficial for a healthy skin complexion, says Reid Maclellan, M.D., M.M.Sc., an adjunct faculty at Harvard Medical School and the founder and CEO of Cortina.

He says, while sure, there are some things you don't have control over, try to pick a few things to stay on top of, like getting enough sleep, exercising, eating well and maintaining your skincare regimen.



Adie Bush/Getty Images

Be mindful of what you eat

During the holiday season, we tend to go to more parties and gatherings with our friends and family. And, of course, this means we're devouring our beloved comfort foods and glasses of wine. Unfortunately, though, most of these foods and beverages contain sugar, gluten, and/or dairy, all ingredients that can cause blemishes and breakouts, warns esthetician Erica Marie. Though you shouldn't completely skip out on dishes you eat every year, try to keep moderation in mind and go for one serving instead of three.

Also, you can give your body a little nudge to keep doing its thing in terms of digestion by keeping your fiber intake up, says Carla Ricciardone, the owner and artist at Sculpted Studios. This can be as simple as drinking a cilium supplement in the evening before bed. "This will keep you regular and your self-cleaning organs properly eliminating the toxins you are bound to expose it to during the holidays," she says.

Choose less-sugary alcoholic drinks

Though some people are happy with a sober lifestyle, others want to enjoy their favorite alcoholic beverages during the holiday season. And that's a good thing — life is meant to be savored. However, if you want to give your skin a fighting chance, Moor suggests opting for less sugary drinks and, sadly, avoiding wine. "Both can dehydrate your skin, contribute to redness or cause your face to look dull and puffy," she adds.

For an alternative, Moor recommends sipping on lime sodas and vodka sodas, which are easier-on-the-skin than drinks that are packed with sugar. “If you prefer cocktails, a cooling lime, cucumber and vodka soda with a twist of cranberry will taste refreshing and look festive,” she says.

Keep it simple and clean

You don’t need to go overboard on products to ensure your skin remains glowy and vibrant this holiday season. Instead, follow Ricciardone’s advice and keep it simple and clean. “Just like the body, it’s important to let the facial skin rest as well,” she says. “So if you want to go full out with the glam for the evening, let the skin just be hydrated and dewy for the day.”

Also, remember, when you remove the makeup, use a hydrating cleanser that will not strip the skin of its essentials and apply a good face oil and moisturizer. “This will really help with limiting breakouts and that stunning glow,” she adds.

Another part of cleanliness is also ensuring your brushes and sponges are frequently cleaned, says celebrity makeup artist Judi Gabbay. “Keeping your makeup kit clean can be the simplest way to make sure you avoid breakouts and maintain the health of your skin,” she says.

“Spray a cosmetic sanitizer on your actual makeup palettes and powders to refresh and kill any bacteria that may be living on your products. Shampoo your makeup brushes and sponges regularly to prolong the life and cleanliness of your applicators, and spray brush disinfectant between each use. Keeping your applicators sanitized can keep your skin happy and clear.”

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