

11 Surprising Reasons Your Skin Gets So Greasy

Sick of dealing with shiny skin no matter how much effort you put into fighting it? Here, we ask dermatologists for the unsuspecting culprits that lead to excess skin grease.

BY JENN SINRICH

It seems like we can blame our hormones for just about anything—check out this list of hormonal troubles. Your skin also is also a potential victim: Hormonal imbalances can be caused by everything from diet, exercise, birth control use and, of course, menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause. "These hormonal changes lead to overactive sebaceous glands in our skin and excess oil production which makes the outer layer feel greasy," explains Joel Schlessinger, MD, Board Certified Dermatologist and RealSelf contributor. He recommends a gentle cleanser that will remove excess oil without stripping the skin and causing irritation, like Epionce Lytic Gel Cleanser.

Eating too much dairy: Some of our favorite foods fall into the dairy category—cheese, milk, yogurt, butter. But studies have shown that these products, milk especially, stimulate oil glands in the skin and even lead to acne. "Due to the amount of hormones they contain, dairy products can cause an imbalance in oil production and lead to greasy skin, which is especially problematic for those who are acne-prone," Dr. Schlessinger explains. (Here are some dairy myths you can stop believing right now.) If you can't find the strength to cut back on your consumption of dairy, he recommends using a detoxifying mask like Dermalogica Charcoal Rescue Masque when your skin is feeling particularly oily.

Your genetics: You know your curly hair comes from your dad's side of the family and your freckles and blue eyes come from your mom's, but did you know your skin type is also genetic?

"If you are genetically built to have more sebaceous glands in the skin, then, naturally, you will have more oil production," explains [Anna Avaliani, MD, cosmetic and laser skin care expert based in New York City](#). Unfortunately, there's nothing you can do to fight this except to manage what increases your oil production the most (i.e. diet, lifestyle, skin care use).

If you're wondering about what else your genetics can tell you, here's what you need to know about genetic testing. And like many things about you, your parents can determine whether you're more or less likely to have oily skin (as well as wrinkly!).

Using the wrong moisturizer: Even oily skin types still need to incorporate a moisturizer in their skin care regimen—though it's more important for folks with oily skin to choose one specifically geared towards their skin type. "If someone with oily skin uses a rich moisturizer formulated for dry skin, their skin will likely feel greasy by the end of the day," says Dr. Schlessinger. He

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recommends LovelySkin LUXE Mattifying Antioxidant Moisturizer. "It's oil-free and provides essential lightweight hydration to minimize excess oil and shine."

Certain supplements and medications: You may not have realized, but those multivitamins you take each morning or that prescription medicine that helps curb mood swings may be impacting your skin. Make sure you ask your doctor these ten questions when you get a new prescription. Your doctor can update you on any potential side effects that may impact your skin or recommend certain skin care products to help address some of the changes you may experience. As always, be sure to consult your doctor before starting or stopping any medications you are taking.

Your stress level: Stressed much? You're far from alone. In fact, the American Psychological Association reports that stress levels in America are increasing each year. Stress not only takes a toll on us emotionally, it also takes a toll physically—make sure you know these 37 expert stress management tips. "When we become stressed, the level of the body's stress hormone (cortisol) rises," explains Dr. Schlessinger. "This, in turn, causes an increase in oil production, which can lead to oily skin, acne and other related skin problems, that can create even more stress for us." Learning how to manage the effects of stress can help keep skin from becoming aggravated.

Wearing heavy makeup: Especially if you have blemish-prone skin, you may be tempted to pile on the cover-up, but skin experts warn that this can lead to more break ups and greasier skin.

"Heavy, full-coverage makeup increases oil production and blocks pores," says Dr. Avaliani.

She recommends opting for lighter textures and searching for products that contain keywords like "oil-control" or "mattifying." Try powder-finished make-up, like Glossier's Wowder, and see a skin specialist to help you clear your skin so you will start using less makeup," she adds. While you're at it, be sure to clean your brushes regularly and invest in a good makeup remover and toner to clean out those pores!

You're not drinking enough water: It might sound counterintuitive—if you're not drinking enough water then wouldn't your skin be dry instead of greasy? Potentially, but experts point out that hydration usually makes oil glands less oily.

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"Drinking adequate amounts of water throughout the day leads to less blockage of the skin glands and less inflammation," says [Dr. Avaliani](#).

She recommends trying to consume at least two liters of water daily and avoiding soda, as it doesn't hydrate you the same way and can even lead to skin problems. Here are some clever ways to work more fluids into your day.

Applying the wrong sunscreen: If you're putting on sunscreen daily, good for you. That's one step in the right direction, as sunscreen is a must for everyone regardless of skin type. However, Dr. Schlessinger points out that certain sunscreens can leave a greasy residue on the surface of the skin, which can lead to blemishes and skin irritations. This is a list of sunscreens that dermatologists prefer. Dr. Schlessinger recommends investing in a sunscreen brand that caters to individual skin types, like EltaMD. "EltaMD UV Clear Broad-Spectrum SPF 46 is oil-free and non-comedogenic, so it's perfect for oily and acne-prone skin," he says. "With 5 percent niacinamide, this sunscreen clears breakouts and soothes skin while providing necessary sun protection."

Your bed linens: First thing first: How often do you wash your sheets? You should be washing them once a week at least to ensure your bed isn't a hotspot for fungal contamination and dirt, which can, of course, lead to breakouts. Not convinced? Check out exactly what happens between the sheets. In addition, [Dr. Avaliani](#) suggest shopping for sheets that are made with natural fibers, like cotton and linen, and to avoid polyester. "Natural fibers help absorb oil production and cause less irritation to the skin," she says. She also suggests trying a less harsh detergent and avoiding fabric softener to prevent excess grease.

The weather: Ever wonder why you feel more sticky and greasy in the summer and more dry in the winter? Answer: Hot, humid or rainy weather affects your skin and increases oil production. Unfortunately, we can't control the weather but [Dr. Avaliani](#) recommends carrying around blotting papers, like Shiseido's Oil-Control Blotting Paper, and using a charcoal mask, like Origins Clear Improvement Active Charcoal Mask, to help flush out environmental toxins, dirt, and debris that can clog pores.