



## **Q: Are plant oils better for the skin than moisturizers?**

A: I am often asked whether plant-derived oils such as coconut oil, argan oil or olive oil, can be used in place of a moisturizing cream, and in a word, the answer is no.

Oils have gotten a lot of buzz in the beauty world and their allure is obvious: they are marketed as "pure" plant extracts, free of any suspicious fillers or preservative. Just a few drops can supposedly give the user dewy, glowing skin. Judging from the marketing hype, plants oils can deliver skin/hair miracles!

Plant oils may be good for softening skin and hair, and providing a temporary occlusive or water-sealant effect, but don't do much more for the skin. What's

more, it's easy to misjudge the right amount to apply and excess oils on the skin are an invitation to accumulate dirt/bacteria and cause breakouts.

Skin tissue is a complex mix of oils and water, but what makes skin look plump and dewy is actually water, specifically water in the epidermis. The outermost layer of skin, the epidermis, receives water by capillary diffusion from the dermis, and the amount of this water is strictly controlled by the body's physiology (not by how many glasses of water you drink!). Therefore, if the epidermis is dry, one of the best things to do is apply water, humectants that bind water, along with a small amount of oils/waxes to seal the water in. A moisturizer has all these components in one neat package: water, oil, humectants. A really good moisturizer contains all of these components, plus natural moisturizing factors like urea and hyaluronic acid, that add to the naturally occurring NMFs in your skin and help to provide a longer lasting moisturizing effect that is far better than oils alone.

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Summer is in full swing! I just did a talk on skin care for mature skin, for the seniors' community at the Bernard Betel Centre in North York, and I have two more talks scheduled this month. For the first time ever, I am being hosted by the Oakville Public Library. I will be going in-depth into "The Science of Beauty" on Thursday, June 23, 2016 at 7 p.m (details [here](#)) Please note that the Oakville Library is charging a small admission fee of \$15. The following week, I will be returning to the theme of skin care for mature skin at the Brentwood Branch of the Toronto Public Library, Monday, June 27 at 2 p.m. (details [here](#)). Talks at the



**June is Senior's Month!!  
Skin Care Tips for Mature Skin:**

- **USE SUN PROTECTION!!** (Hat, opaque clothing, sunscreen). It's never too late to start protecting your skin from sun damage!
- **Be kind to your skin!** Use a gentle cleanser and lots of moisturizer.

Toronto libraries are free to the public but please call in advance to register as space in the meeting rooms is often limited.

- Eat healthy, get sleep, exercise and destress (true for all ages!).



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