

SHAPE

Get the Scoop On the Slugging Skin-Care Hack, Straight from Derms

Experts explain what slugging is, its potential benefits, and whether you should try this super-hydrating beauty practice.



What Is Slugging?

It's nothing too fancy or complicated. "The term 'slugging' originated in South Korea and it involves coating your skin in a thick ointment-based moisturizer or petroleum as the last step in your skincare routine before bed," says Neda Mehr, M.D., board-certified dermatologist in Newport Beach, California and medical director at [Pure Dermatology Cosmetic & Hair Center](#).

Why, though? "Slugging can assist in achieving a dewy, almost 'glass-like' look," says Dr. Mehr. "The ultimate benefit of slugging is hydration, which can lead to many more benefits like more glowy, bouncy, plump skin."

Often, people use [Vaseline](#) (Buy It, \$12 ~~\$13~~ for 3-pack, [amazon.com](#)), aka petroleum jelly, for slugging.

Who Should Try Slugging?

"If your skin is dry to normal (not oily/combination), you can slug as frequently as every night," says Dr. Mehr.

Slugging is also a great option for those dealing with age-related skin issues, says Dr. Gohara (who says that's why she does it, personally). "With aging comes decreased barrier repair, decreased hydration, saggy skin, and more obvious wrinkles," she explains. "Slugging essentially acts as a buoy to the barrier, keeping water locked in and the skin plumped."

Its benefits for the skin barrier make it something that those dealing with irritation and issues such as eczema might want to consider as well, adds Dr. Zeichner. The fact that Vaseline has no additives or fragrances makes it — and slugging — safe even for those with very sensitive skin or eczema, points out Y. Claire Chang, M.D., a board-certified cosmetic dermatologist at Union Square Laser Dermatology in New York City.

What about oily or acne-prone skin? Sadly, you may want to steer clear of slugging, according to the derms interviewed. While cosmetic-grade petroleum jelly, e.g. Vaseline, in and of itself is non-comedogenic (translation: won't clog pores), because it is such a thick occlusive, it can trap dead skin cells and bacteria and ultimately lead to breakouts, explains Dr. Chang. So, unfortunately, no, slugging isn't a good way to deal with acne. (Related: [The Best Skin-Care Routine for Acne-Prone Skin](#))

And heads up if you have a pretty involved skin-care routine. "I would avoid slugging in combination with any active ingredients like retinols, retinoids, alpha-hydroxy acids (AHAs), or beta-hydroxy acids (BHAs), as it can cause irritation by locking these strong ingredients on your skin," explains Dr. Mehr.

How to Slug Your Face

If you want to try slugging, follow these dermatologist-approved steps.

1. **Wash your face.** And make sure your skin is completely clean. As noted above, slugging can potentially lock in dirt and oil, so it's important to **cleanse your face well** prior, advises Dr. Chang.
2. **Continue (selectively) with your skin-care routine.** Do any post-cleanse steps that usually belong in your skin-care routine (think: moisturizer), but skip more powerful ingredients (such as retinols, retinoids, AHAs, and BHAs), according to Dr. Mehr.
3. **Apply your slugging layer.** You want to totally coat your face, but no need to apply coat after coat. Try scooping up some Vaseline on your pointer, middle, and ring fingers — "about the size of a piece of edamame" — and evenly distribute all over your face right before bedtime, says Dr. Gohara.
4. **Head to bed.** Worth noting: Use a pillowcase you don't care about destroying, since some product (which tends to be greasy) will inevitably get on your pillow, says Dr. Gohara. Alternately, place a towel over your pillow to protect it and your sheets.
5. **(Maybe) wash in the a.m.** Dr. Mehr recommends washing your face in the morning with a light cleanser and water, but Dr. Gohara takes a different approach. If you usually wash your face come morning, go ahead and do so, but it's not necessary to wash off your slugging product from the night before, she says. Either way, be sure to admire your gorgeously glowy new skin.