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The Science of Suncare

Summertime Guide

Are Washcloths Harmful for the Face?

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The perfect cleanser may have been chosen, but there is another important decision to make—ultrasonic cleansing brush, silicone cleansing pad, or a plain, traditional washcloth? Washcloths seem like a straightforward way of washing the face but using the right kind of washcloth in the right way is essential. There are some important rules to keep in mind to ensure

glowing, healthy skin.

Wash the face twice daily. No matter the washcloth of choice, it is essential to wash the face twice daily (morning and night) even if makeup has not been worn or one's face does not feel dirty. In the morning, washing the face prepares skin for the rest of the skin care regimen. Remind clients that at night they should never go to sleep with makeup on. Washing the face before applying one's nightly toner, serum, and moisturizer supports the skin as it renews itself while sleeping.

Other important factors to remind clients of include not using washcloths to scrub their skin. They should gently wash their face and pat it dry. Avoid dragging the washcloth across skin because vigorous movements can strip natural oils from skin's protective barrier, leading to dryness, inflammation, and skin sagging. Instead of depending on the washcloth to exfoliate, clients should use a facial cleanser containing alpha or beta hydroxy acids, like mandelic, glycolic, lactic, or salicylic acid to remove dead skin cells, clear pores, and leave a healthy glow.

One can also change things up by trying cleansing materials from around the world, such as Asian konjac sponges, Greek sea sponges, or Korean green towels.

Make sure to choose the right material. Many fabrics are gentler than traditional terrycloth, such as organic cotton and silk, microfiber, and bamboo. In fact, bamboo washcloths are naturally hypoallergenic and antimicrobial. The best rule is to look for baby washcloths, whether made of bamboo or high-quality soft fabrics. One can also change things up by trying cleansing materials from around the world, such as Asian konjac sponges, Greek sea sponges, or Korean green towels.

Clients should avoid reusing washcloths. If left wet, crumpled up, or hanging in a damp shower, a washcloth becomes a breeding ground for bacteria. If one reuses the washcloth, they may be spreading germs all over their face and triggering blemishes instead of purifying the skin. The number of bacteria that can build-up in the moist environment of a washcloth in a few hours is staggering, even if it air-dries completely.

Whether choosing a washcloth or not, other important parts of a client's regimen to follow cleansing include exfoliation, hydration, and the use of products containing antioxidants, peptides, stem cells, and growth factors. Customize a regimen depending on the client's skin condition, season of the year, and lifestyle because all those factors impact a personalized beauty regimen. Likewise, depending on the choice of fabric and handling methods, there are advantages and disadvantages to using washcloths to cleanse the face. The verdict? Let's just call it a wash.