

WHAT THE
expert
says



DERMATOLOGIST

**DR. PATRICIA K. FARRIS;
NEW ORLEANS, LA**

Patricia K. Farris, MD, a New Orleans dermatologist, sets the record straight: "Good scientific studies have suggested that peptides really do offer an anti-aging benefit," she says. "They are all just chains of amino acids—tiny fragments of proteins strung together that are found naturally in the human body." Only in the early 1990s did scientists begin to discover that peptides have special benefits for the skin: They may speed healing, kick-start collagen production to diminish wrinkling, or disrupt muscle contractions that contribute to eye-crinkling wrinkles. But the best perk may be that peptides are gentler than that other popular anti-aging ingredient: retinol. "They truly are not as irritating, and that's one of the reasons many of the consumer brands have turned to them," says Dr. Farris, who adds that daily use of a peptide cream may result in visible smoothness and firmness in about 12 weeks.

**DERMADOCTOR
IMMOBILE LINES**

Whether used on its own or in conjunction with Botox, this topical line relaxer claims to reduce the appearance of up to 90 percent of wrinkles within 10 minutes of application. \$85; dermadactor.com



**KINERASE C6 PEPTIDE
INTENSIVE TREATMENT**

This once-a-day residue-free serum contains hexapeptides, green tea extract and vitamins C and E to reduce the appearance of facial lines while protecting even sensitive skin from damaging free radicals without irritation. \$96; spalook.com

wrinkle-relaxing peptides
(HEXAPEPTIDES)

IN THE LAST THREE TO FOUR YEARS, CREAMS CONTAINING A NEW PEPTIDE—A CHAIN OF SIX AMINO ACIDS CALLED ACETYL HEXAPEPTIDE-3, ALSO KNOWN AS ARGIRELINE—HAVE BEEN TOUTED AS TOPICAL MUSCLE RELAXERS.

HOW THEY WORK: BOTOX-LIKE EFFECTS

While skin-care products may not penetrate deep enough to affect the muscles and nerves, in vitro (read: Petri dish) tests conducted in the late 1990s suggested that hexapeptides have the ability to work in a manner similar to Botox injections by interfering with the neurochemical signal between nerves and muscles. "You're basically not allowing the muscle to contract, so you're smoothing out the muscle and smoothing out the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles," says Dr. Berson. In studies conducted by the skincare company DermAvance, wrinkles were found to be 30 percent shallower in individuals who applied a cream containing acetyl hexapeptide-3 daily for a month. "Using a cream is definitely not going to give you the same effect as an injection directly into a muscle," says Dr. Berson. "But if you use a product containing a hexapeptide, it may prolong the benefits of Botox."