

Good Alcohols for Skin

Let's talk about alcohol! Not the kind you put in piña colada mix, but the kind that you use on your skin. Yep, that's right! We tend to think that putting alcohol on your face can damage it and this is partially true. While there are types of alcohol that definitely shouldn't be used on your skin, there are a few types that are actually beneficial: cetearyl, stearyl, cetyl, and behenyl.

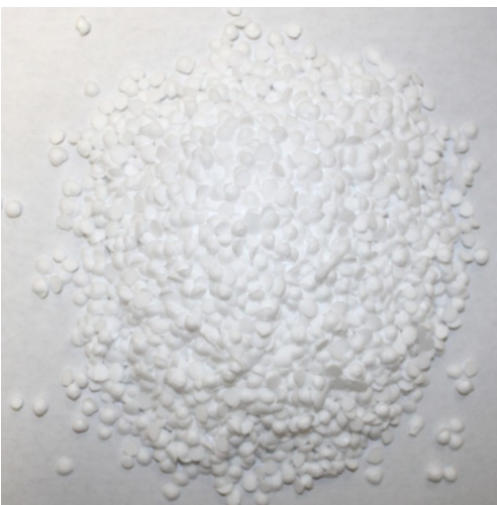
To start off, what are the types of alcohol that you should avoid using on your skin? The names of those bad boys are: ethanol, isopropyl alcohol, alcohol denat, and methanol. If you see any of these names on your labels, make the change and toss those products out! Now that that's out of the way, let's talk good alcohol:



Cetearyl

According to [healthline.com](https://www.healthline.com), cetearyl alcohol is used to help soften the skin, as well as thicken and stabilize cosmetic products. Cetearyl is also considered an "effective ingredient of soothing and healing dry skin". This alcohol is a waxy substance and can be derived from plants or formulated in a lab. You may see it listed in your ingredients as "C16-18 alcohol" or "cetostearyl alcohol".

Cetearyl Alcohol in its raw state (Source)



Stearyl

Like cetearyl alcohol, stearyl alcohol acts as a lubricant for the skin. This can be very important ingredient for those with extremely dry skin. It's classified as a "fatty alcohol" since it is waxy in substance and derived from oils, like coconut and palm.

Stearyl Alcohol in its raw state (Source)

Cetyl

Cetyl alcohol is known to soften skin, which makes it an ideal ingredient for anti-aging products. And like the two above, cetyl alcohol is a fatty alcohol, so it's beneficial to use for hydrating the skin.



Cetyl Alcohol in its raw state (Source)

Behenyl

If you see behenyl alcohol on the back of your skincare product—fear not! Behenyl alcohol is often used as a thickener and opacifying agent in cosmetic products. This basically means that it makes the product a bit prettier and more luscious-looking, which is why it's primarily used in face and body lotions.



Behenyl Alcohol in its raw state (Source)

Knowing what's in your products is key to being an informed, and safe, consumer. Next time you're applying your skin care products, take a look at the label! *Do your products contain good or bad alcohol?*