

Women's Health.

The 12 Best Drugstore Eye Creams, According To Dermatologists And A Beauty Editor

Dark circles don't stand a chance.

By Lily Wohlner | Published: Nov 1, 2023 | Verified | Reviewed by Brian Underwood



As someone who's really into skincare, I have to admit that I used to spend a small fortune on skincare products that promised to fix my dark under-eye circles. But, after trying countless formulas (and emptying my wallet), I've switched to using drugstore eye creams. And trust me when I say they work just as good, if not better, than anything else I've tested. In fact, you can find a lot of the same exact ingredient formulations in drugstore formulas as you can in luxury ones.

"When choosing an eye cream, it's important to choose ingredients and formulations that are going to give you the results you want, without breaking the bank," says dermatologist Richard Bottiglione, MD. So, whether you're struggling with dark circles, puffy eyes, wrinkles, dry skin, heavy eye bags,

or anything in-between, it's important to do some research to find which one fits your specific needs. Thankfully, we've done most of the work for you and tested the 12 best drugstore eye creams for every concern, with help from four dermatologists and WH beauty director Brian Underwood. So, what are you waiting for? Keep scrolling to find the absolute best option for you.

According to dermatologist Margarita Lolis, MD, this eye cream works wonders thanks to peptides, which help make your skin appear firmer and tighter. It also contains niacinamide, known for its skin-repairing abilities, and caffeine to tackle those pesky dark circles.

However, what makes this cream special is its unique formula. Inside the bottle, you'll

find a combination of a hydrating gel and a firming cream, swirled together to create a finish that doesn't compromise on results.

On top of all that, as Dr. Lolis puts it, "It's really smooth and lightweight when you apply it under your eyes." You can even use it under your makeup to achieve a super smooth base that stays put all day long. So, not only does it work well, but it's also easy to use and *perf* for keeping your look fresh all day long.

Trust me when I tell you this eye cream is an absolute gem. Here's the scoop: it's the lightest option in our lineup, thanks to its gel formulation. Instead of sitting on the surface, it quickly sinks into your skin, leaving behind a subtle, radiant glow that gives your face that fresh, clean look (uh, who doesn't want that?)

Now, let's talk ingredients. This eye cream is loaded with vitamin C, ginseng root extract, coffee, and niacinamide, all which claim to banish puffiness. They also brighten and detoxify, making your undereye area look totally refreshed. Are you convinced yet?

If you're struggling with aging skin, look no further than Roc's cult-favorite Retinol Under Eye Cream. According to Dr. Lolis, the retinol in the formula tightens skin by restructuring your collagen and amping up its production. "This helps fine reduce lines, wrinkles, and crows feet," she says. "It also helps increase the thickness of the skin."

Because it contains a milder form of retinol, it also improves the overall skin texture and reduces the appearance of dark

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circles over time, adds dermatologist Divya Shokeen, MD.

This infamous eye cream also contains retinol, but it has the added bonus of ceramides to keep your skin moisturized and hydrated, says Dr. Lolis. According to Dr. Shokeen, it also includes niacinamide and peptides to target fine lines, wrinkles, and loss of elasticity. “It truly is one of my favorite eye creams,” she notes.

And, according to testers, it lives up to the smoothing and plumping hype. “I began using this eye cream just one week ago,” writes one happy tester. “I apply it as directed—at night under my eyes—spreading it out to cover both the sides and upper portion of my eyes. The results I’ve seen are amazing.” Among the changes she’s experienced: the small wrinkles in the corners of her eyes have diminished, the puffiness under her eyes has disappeared, and the dark undereye bags have lightened up. “It’s also so moisturizing and lightweight,” she notes.

The consensus among dermatologists is clear: this affordable drugstore eye cream reigns supreme in the hydration game. Dermatologist Navin Arora, DO, FAAD, is an advocate, especially for those with dry skin, thanks to its boost of hyaluronic acid. This ingredient not only delivers intense hydration but

also reduces the appearance of fine lines, making it a go-to choice in his office.

Dr. Shokeen also chimes in on the efficacy of this cream, noting that it goes beyond just moisturization and plumps up the delicate skin around your eyes. This extra boost feels “so good on those sleepy mornings when your eyes could use a bit of a boost.

What’s more, the water gel formula offers an awakening feel upon application, ensuring your eye area stays bright throughout the day, even when you layer on makeup.

If you have multiple concerns you want to address, this eye cream tackles most of them. According to Dr. Arora, it’s great for targeting multiple concerns around the eye area at once, like dark circles, puffiness, and fine lines. Its claim to fame? Peptides and vitamin B₃ (also known as niacinamide), which help rejuvenate the thin, delicate skin around the eyes.

To use this cream, apply it on cleansed skin morning and night by massaging a small amount around the eye until fully absorbed. You’ll be shook at how smooth your skin feels within minutes of application.

While testers love how quickly it hydrates, some say you need to re-apply it a few times per

day to keep the moisturizing benefits going.

If you’ve tried CeraVe’s Moisturizing Cream, you know how solid the brand’s products are, and that rule is no different when it comes to their Eye Repair Cream. Dr. Shokeen explains that it packs a one-two punch with hyaluronic acid and niacinamide, which team up to both hydrate and brighten the undereye area. She adds that the niacinamide continues to work its magic over time, gradually making your undereyes even brighter. Also included in the formula? Three different types of ceramides, which restore and maintain the skin’s natural barrier.

Apply a pea-sized amount to the skin underneath the eyes both morning and night for super moisturized undereyes and the strongest skin barrier you’ve experienced yet.

Yet another retinol eye cream on this list, L’Oreal’s Revitalift Triple Power Eye Cream gets to work on lax skin and dark circles from pigmentation. “It’s enriched with pro-retinol to firm and boost collagen production, and it also has hyaluronic acid and vitamin C to brighten and deeply hydrate,” says Dr. Shokeen.

According to the brand, skin will feel softer and more hydrated for a full 24 hours after use.

And within one week, the brand claims this cream will visibly reduce wrinkles and firm and brighten the skin.

Some testers even noticed instant results with this eye cream. “This eye cream literally works in seconds,” says one tester. “I can’t wait to see the long-term effects. As someone who’s been battling undereye circles and has tried multiple creams, I’m so happy to have found this.”

WH beauty director Brian Underwood is a huge fan of this eye cream, and there’s no question why. Firstly, it’s suuuper easy to apply, thanks to a cooling roller ball that reduces puffiness with every stroke. The formula, which feels like a gel, also houses cooling caffeine and mint and brightening vitamin C for fresh looking (and feeling) undereyes. The second it touches your skin, you’ll see and feel instant relief if you struggle with puffy eyes and dullness in the morning.

This wallet-friendly eye cream boasts a unique formula featuring a blackberry complex, vitamin E, and antioxidants. According to Dr. Shokeen, this powerhouse trio works wonders by deeply moisturizing and nourishing dry skin while also combatting the effects of collagen loss. So, if you’re dealing with aging skin showing signs like crow’s feet or sagging, this cream has got your back.

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And the good news doesn't stop there. All these ingredients have undergone ophthalmologist testing and are non-comedogenic, making it a perfect choice for those with a sensitive under-eye area or acne-prone skin.

Another one of Underwood's favorites, CeraVe's Skin Renewing Eye Cream (not to be mistaken with the other CeraVe eye cream on this list) is awesome for anti-aging. Per the brand, it moisturizes and helps restore the protective skin barrier with three essential ceramides, niacinamide, and caffeine.

Where this cream really shines is in the texture category. It feels so nourishing on top of the skin, and it slowly sinks into the barrier like a dream, unleashing some pretty astonishing results. Some testers even say they saw an improvement in their fine lines and crow's feet in as little as two weeks.

If you've never tried any product from Byoma, you're seriously missing out on the fun (and the hard-hitting results!). But, let's hone-in on this product, the De-Puff and Brighten Eye Gel.

To kick things off, it's not only the most budget-friendly option on our list, but it also contains the most generous amount of product. This focused eye treatment is designed to soothe and illuminate dark circles and puffiness, and it comes in the form of a lightweight gel. With a blend of a tri-ceramide complex, hyaluronic acid, and vitamin C, it works to brighten, calm, hydrate, and rejuvenate the eye area, leaving you with a fresh, smooth complexion that keeps you looking wide awake all day long.

Meet the experts

- **Margarita Lolis, MD**, is a New York and New Jersey-based board-certified dermatologist
- **Richard Bottiglione, MD**, is an Arizona based board-certified dermatologist and founder of Dermatologist Choice Skincare
- **Divya Shokeen, MD**, is a California based board-certified dermatologist
- **Navin Arora, DO, FAAD**, is a New York-based board-certified dermatologist

How our team chose the best drugstore eye creams

For the past month, Women's Health associate e-commerce editor Lily Wohlner has been testing and researching the most popular, and top-rated drugstore eye creams. She tapped online reviews, collaborated with WH beauty director Brian Underwood, and interviewed four dermatologists. Per their recommendations and her own testing notes, she compiled a list of the best options for every budget and preference.

How to shop for the best drugstore eye cream

When it comes to choosing a drugstore eye cream, there are a few factors to consider:

Ingredients: Before all else, the dermatologists quoted in this story all agree that ingredients are the most important part of an eye cream. "Firstly, look for key ingredients like hyaluronic acid, retinol, vitamin C, peptides, and antioxidants, as they can target various concerns such as hydration, fine lines, and dark circles," says Dr. Shokeen. Dr. Arora adds that these ingredients can hydrate, promote collagen production, reduce wrinkles, and protect against environmental damage. According to Dr. Lolis, caffeine is also a big one, as it decreases dark circles due to its vasoconstricting ability.

Formula: "Consider the formula's texture and absorption rate based on your preferences and skin type," says Dr. Shokeen, who explains that it's important to ensure the eye cream is specifically designed for the delicate skin around the eyes. "For example, thicker eye creams can lead to milia which can be very difficult to get rid of," she says.

If you're looking for something to use during the day, Dr. Arora recommends going for something lighter like a gel-based cream. "You want to make sure you're using something that's non-greasy and absorbs easily into the skin," he says. Heavier formulations like creams are also an option, but those are more suitable for nighttime use. "If you don't like a heavy feeling, you might want to use serums instead of a cream," says Dr. Lolis.

Function: A major part of finding the right eye cream is considering your specific concerns, like dark circles, puffiness, or fine lines, says Dr. Arora. "Choose a product that targets your primary concern for the best results."

What is the best age to start using eye cream?

"It's generally recommended to start using an eye cream in your early to mid-20s as a preventive measure," says Dr. Arora. "However, individuals with specific concerns like early signs of

aging or persistent dryness can start even earlier." He notes that prevention is key, so incorporating a mild eye cream into your skincare routine can help maintain the delicate skin around the eyes.

But, Dr. Bottiglione notes that age doesn't matter as much as understanding your unique skin concerns. "Instead of fixating on age, it's more crucial to assess your skin's current condition to gauge the level of treatment required for effective results," he notes.

Can you use a moisturizer instead of an eye cream?

"While a moisturizer can provide hydration, it's generally recommended to use a dedicated eye cream for the under-eye area," says Dr. Shokeen. "The skin around the eyes is thinner and more sensitive than the rest of your face, so using a product specifically formulated for this area can be more beneficial."

However, Dr. Shokeen notes that you can use certain serums to help target the eye area. "Serums for the face usually contain ingredients very similar to certain eye creams that target specific concerns like puffiness, dark circles, and fine lines," she notes.