

Polyhydroxy Acids from NeoStrata Promote Optimal Barrier Function

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Newer polyhydroxy acids (PHAs) contained in home use skincare products from The NeoStrata Company (Princeton, N.J.) have been clinically proven to provide the anti-aging benefits of traditional alpha hydroxy acids (AHAs), while also promoting optimal barrier function. Used alone or in combination with drugs, PHAs such as gluconolactone effectively improve acne and photodamaged skin.

“PHA is a very gentle compound compared to an AHA such as glycolic acid,” said Lenore Kakita, M.D., an associate clinical professor of dermatology at the University of California, Los Angeles. “Glycolic acid is a two carbon, extremely small molecule that penetrates the skin very rapidly and can give the patient a burning sensation. In contrast, PHA is a larger molecule that does not sting and burn. I have never had a single patient experience irritation when using a higher strength (10% to 15%) PHA.”

PHAs encourage cell renewal at the lower levels of the skin, promoting development of a healthy barrier. In addition, gluconolactone attracts water to its molecule for “increased hydration and moisturization throughout the day, whereas AHA does not have this ability,” Dr. Kakita noted. “This also helps to improve the skin barrier.” Polyhydroxy bionic acids, including lactobionic acid, “attract extra water for even greater hydration and moisturization.”

Both the bionic acids and PHAs “are extremely efficient in chemical exfoliation,” Dr. Kakita noted. Gluconolactone can also be used in combination with retinoids or benzoyl peroxide.

Recent clinical studies concluded that compared to AHAs, PHAs have physical and chemical properties that enhance their effects in dermatologic formulations, including an enhanced skin barrier effect, greater moisturization and less irritation potential. For example, the PHA gluconolactone (14%) demonstrated significant skin

benefits when used in patients with acne, and was better tolerated than 5% benzoyl peroxide.

Dr. Kakita’s favorite product is NeoStrata Bionic Face Cream. “This has a combination of gluconolactone and lactobionic acids,” she said. “I use this in acne patients and in aging skin.” Patients typically apply a small amount of the cream twice a day, after washing. NeoStrata Bionic Lotion is similar to the bionic face cream for those patients desiring a lighter feel.

“PHAs are not only very effective, but they are extremely well tolerated,” concurred Michael Bond, M.D., a dermatologist in private practice in the Orlando, Fla., area. “Most people come to the dermatologist after they have made a lot of mistakes in taking care of their acne. Many of the prescription acne medications are very irritating and very drying. NeoStrata’s PHA products are not. Unfortunately, for a long time we thought that if the face wasn’t red, scaling and peeling, the medicine was not effective. We now know the exact opposite is true.”

Dr. Bond has found NeoStrata products to be very efficacious for all forms of acne. “I can use these products on cystic acne as well as sensitive rosacea patients,” he said. “With most other products, it is very difficult to treat rosacea. Even rosacea medications irritate rosacea patients. But NeoStrata products tend not to.”

In fact, Dr. Bond uses NeoStrata products to treat nearly all dermatologic conditions involving the stratum corneum. “When this layer thickens, many of the topical medicines cannot penetrate,” he conveyed. “NeoStrata products penetrate the skin and optimize skin thickness, enabling increased penetration and effectiveness of other medications. NeoStrata’s PHAs are a major component in my dermatology treatment strategy. I consider PHAs the next generation of AHAs.”