

## **Inclusive Skincare for Darker Skin Tones**

Darker skin tones are rich in melanin and beautifully diverse, and they come with unique skincare needs. Inclusive skincare formulation requires awareness, intentional ingredient selection, and an understanding of skin biology. This guide outlines key concerns, skin behavior, and best practices to effectively care for and formulate products for darker skin tones.

### **Unique Skin Needs of Darker Skin Tones**

- Increased melanin provides some natural UV protection but also contributes to uneven skin tone and hyperpigmentation.
- Skin may be more prone to keloids and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH).
- Can appear dry or ashy if not properly moisturized due to higher trans-epidermal water loss.
- Requires gentle yet effective cleansing and barrier support.

### **Common Skin Issues in Darker Tones**

- Post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH)
- Uneven skin tone or dullness
- Dryness and flakiness (especially in colder climates)
- Acne and blemishes with lingering dark marks
- Sensitivity to harsh acids or overly aggressive exfoliation

### **Beneficial Ingredients for Darker Skin**

- Niacinamide: Brightens and balances tone, supports skin barrier.
- Alpha Arbutin: Safe and effective for reducing dark spots.
- Licorice Root Extract: Calms irritation and reduces hyperpigmentation.
- Hyaluronic Acid: Deep hydration without heaviness.
- Squalane: Moisturizes and mimics skin's natural oils.
- Ceramides: Strengthen and protect the skin barrier.
- Lactic Acid: Gentle exfoliation for brighter tone and smoother texture.

### **Caring for Darker Skin Tones: Skincare Routine Tips**

1. Use a non-stripping, pH-balanced cleanser.
2. Follow with a hydrating toner or essence.
3. Apply a serum with brightening or soothing actives (e.g., niacinamide, licorice root).
4. Use a moisturizer rich in emollients and humectants.
5. Apply a broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen, yes, even darker skin needs sun protection.
6. At night, lock in moisture with facial oils or overnight creams.
7. Exfoliate weekly with gentle acids (avoid harsh scrubs).