



COSMETICS / SKIN CARE

Topical skin care agents have been used since pre-historic times, when individuals applied compounds of mud and leaves to their body, soothing and protecting irritated skin. Formularies for cosmetics may be found on ancient Egyptian papyrus writings and images on hieroglyphics.

One of the most popular ancient cosmetic products still used today is the cold cream, Ceratum Galeni, formulated by Galen 130-203 CE. Ceratum is a mixture of beeswax, oils, and rose water. The cream was used as a vehicle to deliver actives contained in herbal additives. It provided a barrier to protect skin and gave a cooling effect, as water evaporated from the cream after application to skin.

Moisturizing of skin did not become a central concept of skin care until the 1950's, when dermatological research demonstrated the importance of water content in the skin's horny layer. Moisturizers increase the water-holding capacity of the stratum corneum by incorporation of hydroscopic agents (humectants) and occlusive agents to form a barrier against water loss.

In recent years, technology has enabled investigators to evaluate more accurately and to compare the efficacy of various moisturizing agents and vehicles. Common measurement techniques include impedance, conductance, transepidermal water loss (TEWL), tape stripping, coefficient of friction, and D Squame image analysis. These test methods enable formulation of skin care products specifically designed for diverse climates and potentially better suited for specific age and racial groups.

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