

# ANTI-AGEING HEROES PART 2: CERAMIDES

In the second part of our series on Anti-Ageing Heroes, we turn our attention to ceramides. They're often touted as a 'wonder ingredient' in skincare formulations, but what's the truth that lies behind the hype?

## SO WHAT ARE CERAMIDES?

Ceramides are a type of lipid (fat) and a major component of the stratum corneum. Like hyaluronic acid, they are present in the spaces between skin cells and are part of the 'glue' that holds them together. Their main anti-ageing benefit is that they provide a waterproof protective barrier and prevent Trans Epidermal Water Loss (TEWL), maintaining skin hydration levels while keeping bacteria and pollutants out - vital for clients living in urban areas.

Ceramides and hyaluronic acid are perfect companions: the former helps to maintain lipid levels while the latter attracts water and holds it in the skin. Combine them, and you've got an anti-ageing powerhouse.

## GOING, GOING, GONE

Like hyaluronic acid - and most other beneficial skin components - ceramide levels deplete as we

age. External factors such as UV radiation, pollution, poor diet and even the winter months can also sap the supply, so it's important to replenish them. Without adequate levels, the skin's protective barrier becomes compromised, leaving it more susceptible to damage. As if this wasn't bad enough, low ceramide levels make signs of ageing more prominent - those wrinkles look so much worse when skin is dehydrated.

## RENEW AND REPLENISH

Although there are many creams on the market that contain ceramides, it's more effective to provide skin with the tools to make its own. "Vitamin A has a normalising effect and helps to create healthy keratinocyte cells which are involved in the synthesis of ceramides, so you should definitely be recommending Environ<sup>®</sup>'s Skin EssentiA<sup>®</sup> or Youth EssentiA<sup>®</sup> ranges to your clients", says our training director Tracy Tamaris. "When a healthy keratinocyte travels up

through the layers of the skin and reaches the stratum corneum, it releases lipids as it dies, which maintain the barrier function. If this barrier is damaged it won't do this as effectively, which is why Vitamin A - topically and orally - is essential. Products containing lactic acid, for example Derma-Lac Lotion, and our Cool Peel treatments, also support the body's ability to make its own ceramides."

## SCIENTIFIC BREAKTHROUGH

Your clients may already know that ceramides can be applied topically, but they might not be aware of the incredible results that can be achieved by consuming them in supplement form.

Oral ceramides used to be made from animal sources, but in recent years scientists turned their attention to plant-based versions, known as phyto-ceramides. A major scientific breakthrough occurred when a

### Sources

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4Boisnic, S. et al. (2019) 'Polar lipids from wheat extract oil improve skin damages induced by aging: Evidence from a randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial in women and children with skin exsplant'. Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology, e140412867

