

Lip Balm Addiction? Here's What You Should Know, Recipe Included

It's chapped lip season, and many people are pulling out their trusty tube of lip balm more frequently than usual. All lip balms appear to protect your lips while moisturizing. In reality, a large number of them are actually drying out your lips. This creates a vicious cycle where you pay twice: once for the actual lip balm and once with the actual health of your lips.

When temperatures drop, vulnerable skin is prone to cracks and bleeding. What options do you have to protect your skin without ending up dependent on a product that damages your lips in the long run? Here are some strategies that can help you boost the health of your lips while they're at their most vulnerable, including what to eat, what to look for in a lip balm, and what to avoid.

Why Use Lip Balm?

Lip balm is designed to combat dry skin in a few ways. It can provide a barrier to protect the lips from the elements. It can help fill in the gaps between skin cells. And it can help your lips absorb water by pulling moisture from other areas in the body.

Dry skin allows moisture to escape while speeding up skin production to the point that many of the skin cells being produced are not yet fully mature. Lips are a particularly problematic area, as they contain very few of the oil and sweat glands that protect other areas of the epidermis. A good lip balm can be used for a few days to help your lips recover and heal themselves, but it's important to know what's in the

product you're using and how it specifically affects you. The lips have a different outer layer of skin than the rest of the body, but despite that and the lack of oil and sweat glands, there are still ways you can increase their health and reduce the instances of cracked, dry, and uncomfortable lips that winter brings.

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How Diet Can Play a Difference

As tempting as it is to throw up your hands and declare moisturized lips in winter without a lip balm a lost cause, diet can make a difference in whether you spend the next few months with a plastic tube permanently affixed to your mitten. Upping your intake of healthy Omega-3 fats from foods like flax seed or oily cold water fish is a great idea, as they can help prevent dryness. Vitamins A, B, C, and E are also great nutrients to focus on when targeting dry skin. Vitamin A improves overall skin health. Vitamin B, most specifically niacin (B-3), is a good mood booster found in protein-rich foods that

Vitamins A, B, C, and E are also great nutrients to focus on when targeting dry skin. Vitamin A improves overall skin health. Vitamin B, most specifically niacin (B-3), is a good mood booster found in protein-rich foods that have been shown in studies to protect against some skin disorders associated with skin cracking. Skin benefits from vitamin E and, of course, vitamin C. Possibly the most recommended vitamin for

staying healthy in winter, vitamin C also promotes collagen production for smoother skin.

Overall hydration plays a big part in how dry your skin gets and how quickly it recovers. Food and drinks that cause inflammation and leave you dehydrated can be swapped out for water and the hydrating powers of produce!

Also, smoking anything will rapidly dehydrate your lips.

A Good Lip Balm Looks Like...

Even the healthiest of skin still takes a hit every now and then, and having a quality lip balm can give your skin cells the quick break they need to rebuild and return to top form. But what does that lip balm look like? To begin with, fewer ingredients in the lip balm increases the likelihood of quality. All lip balms start with an oil base. Raw, organic, unprocessed plant oils and butters like jojoba, almond, shea, coconut, olive, avocado, castor oil, and cacao are some of the best options out there. The more closely the oil base mimics your natural body oils, the better it protects your lips.

Other beneficial ingredients in lip balms include herbal infusions, essential oils, and waxes. Herbal infusions can give lip balms an extra dose of skin-friendly ingredients. Some good ones to look for are calendula, yarrow, chamomile, and comfrey. Look for products that get their scent from pure essential oils. Preference obviously plays a big part in what you look for, but mint and its many varieties are the most popular options commercially available. Waxes in lip balm help your balm maintain its shape, and they create a protective barrier on the skin. Popular waxes like beeswax can also have some anti-inflammatory properties. Look for real ingredients

Look for real ingredients like cucumber, aloe vera, rose, or honey that are organic or sustainably sourced. If you have no idea what an item is or it's called something along the

lines of methyl-ethyl-para-oxide-whatchamagidget, it's probably not going to have any real benefits for your lips.

Break Out The Red Tape!

Since the likelihood of ingesting your lip balm is extremely high, it makes sense to avoid balms with toxic ingredients and ingredients that cause more harm than good. Parabens are preservatives commonly used in beauty products that have been linked to estrogen disruption, and they have been found in malignant breast cancer tumors. Ingredients like menthol, camphor, and phenol create a cooling sensation on the lips that gives the impression the lip balm is working, but they can also dry out your lips, and in some cases, they increase lip redness and induce swelling. Artificial fragrances and colors, as well as some natural ingredients like aloe or vitamin E, can cause irritation, so it's important to pay attention to what works for your lips.

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And then there's petroleum jelly. Petroleum jelly is frequently contaminated by polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and the FDA restricts the use of petroleum in food products due to these contaminants that are linked to cancer. Petroleum jelly can also interfere with the function of skin pores and trap in toxins. The FDA hasn't, however, banned petroleum jelly from personal care products, and there is no rule that requires companies to refine the petroleum jelly they use. In contrast, the E.U. and Canada have banned the use of petroleum

jelly in personal care products. Options that have the same function include beeswax, shea butter, and unrefined coconut oil, among others.

Healthy, Simple, Homemade Lip Balm Recipe

This recipe makes just under a cup of lip balm that you can put into small tins or a lip balm container.

Ingredients

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup beeswax
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shea butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup almond oil (contains vitamin E)
- 10+ drops essential oil (any essential oil you want for the scent, I like peppermint)
- Teaspoon of raw honey

Instructions

1. Melt beeswax and shea butter in a double boiler. Alternatively, you can use a or small glass bowl over a small pot of boiling water. Stir continuously until melted.
2. Turn off stove (remove pan from heat if electric), but keep stirring; keep it warm and melted.
3. Add essential oils. And add honey last.
4. It's ready! Use the pipette or a dropper to fill the tubes if you are using them. This must be done quickly since the mixture will tend to harden as soon as it is removed from the heat.
5. Let tubes sit at room temperature for several hours until cooled and completely hardened before capping them.

Notes:

Use an extra teaspoon or two of beeswax if you prefer a thicker and longer-lasting lip balm or slightly less if you prefer a smoother and softer lip balm. This makes 12-14 tubes.

Winter Lips Can Be Lovely

Winter weather is practically designed to exacerbate skin woes, and chapped, cracked lips are no exception. You can increase your chances of making it through winter unscathed by managing and maintaining your skin by increasing the nutrition you provide it through your diet and by using quality skin care products that do not contain problematic ingredients. Protect your skin and set it up for success.

Recommended Reading:

- *Three Homemade Toothpaste Recipes – Better Oral Health for Less Cost*
- *Total Nutrition – Make your own Homemade Multivitamin and Mineral Formula*

Recommended Products:

- Lip Balm – SanRe Organic Skinfood
- Shillington's Tooth and Gum Formula
- Extra Virgin Coconut Oil – Garden of Life

Sources:

- *Diet For Cracked Lips and Fingers – Livestrong*
- *From Chappy to Happy: The Best Lip Balm Ingredients to Keep You Smiling – All Natural Beauty*
- *Can You Be Addicted to Your Lip Balm – Vitals*
- *So, What Is Wrong With Petroleum Jelly? (AKA Vaseline) – Skinplicity*
- *Lip Balm: 6 Ingredients to Look For, 6 Ingredients to Avoid – Swedish Covenant Hospital*