
SALICYLIC ACID – An Effective Skin Care Agent

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Abstract

Salicylic acid is an effective skin care agent that exfoliates dead skin cells and removes excess of oil from the skin to reduce skin acne or other dermal problems such as seborrhea, dandruff, psoriasis blackheads, pimples, scars and hyperpigmentation. However when using this acid certain cautions must be taken to avoid side effects like vomiting, ringing in ears, headache, thinking problems, shortness of breath, stomach pain, diarrhea, hives, dryness etc

Keywords: Hyperpigmentation; Seborrhea; Psoriasis; Calluses; Wart; Reye's syndrome.

Introduction

Salicylic acid has its origin from the Latin term salix since it was first synthesized from a complex carbohydrate found in willow bark [1]. It is a beta hydroxy acid which is oil soluble and allows it to penetrate deep into the skin pores for the removal of dirt and microbes that causes skin problems [2]. Salicylic acid is available in different forms such as cream, gel, lotion, soap, liquid, ointment, skin patches, shampoo and cloth pads [3, 4]. It effectively dissolves the intercellular matrix that holds the skin cells intact and exfoliates the skin to remove dead cells [5].

Role of Salicylic acid in Skin Care

Salicylic acid or its associated dermal products are mostly recommended for the treatment of skin infections and acne issues. Therefore following is a brief outline that how salicylic acid contributes in maintaining a healthy skin.

- Salicylic acid helps in eliminating dead skin cells by dissolving blackheads [6]. Its mechanism involves slackening and breaking apart desmosomes which facilitates

encourages skin exfoliation and unclogging of skin pores [7].

- It's deep cleansing effect by penetrating oily skin and congested pores [8]. In addition alleviating sebum secretion to reduce acne and its associated inflammation/redness [9].
- Salicylic acid not only reduces excessive oil from skin but it also removes black and whiteheads by dissolving the keratin plugs and normalizes the skin cells [10].
- Salicylic acid causes peeling off the wart and also assists in the removal of calluses and corns [11].
- It increases skin moisture and also prevents future comedones from forming [12].
- Salicylic acid for skin is used to treat skin acne, seborrhea, dandruff or psoriasis [13, 14]. It is also effective against blackheads, pimples, scars and hyperpigmentation [15].
- Besides it stimulates oil circulation out of skin pores to reduce acne [16].

- Salicylic acid escalates cell turnover thus increasing skin growth rate and collagen secretion [17].

Cautions when using Salicylic Acid

When using this acid certain cautions must be taken to avoid side effects such as:

- In case of extremely dry skin type, prolonged use of salicylic acid is not recommended [18].it is must to use a moisturizer while using salicylic acid based cure [19].In addition application of this acid is not recommended to the extensive unaffected areas of the skin [20].
- If skin dermis is wrecked, distended or infected avoid using salicylic acid based products [21].
- Since salicylic acid is keratolytic in nature so the individual using it may suffer from side effects such as vomiting, ringing in ears,headache,thinking problems, shortness of breath, stomach pain, diarrhea etc [22,23].
- Do not use salicylic acid on open wounds, wind burned, sunburned, dry or irritated skin etc [24].
- Salicylic acid is flammable in nature so do not use it near heat or open flame [25].In addition avoid smoking unless it has been completely dried.
- Concentrated salicylic acid product may burn the skin so choose the right concentration of salicylic acid [26, 27].
- Salicylic acid topical is reported to cause rare short term allergic reaction such as hives, swelling of face, tongue, lips, or itching [28].
- Do not use it on a child or teenager who has a fever, flu, or chickenpox because it can cause Reye's syndrome in children [29]

Conclusion

Thus this oil soluble antibacterial compound penetrates deep into the skin pores for the removal of dirt and microbes that causes skin problems.

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