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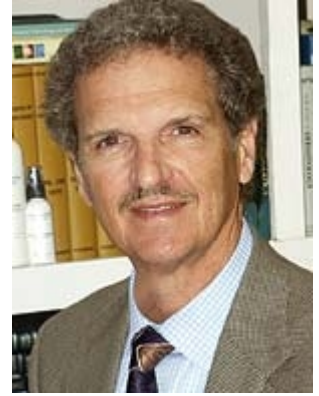
## ASK THE DOCTOR

### Reducing Dark Circles and Puffiness Under the Eyes

By Gary Goldfaden, MD

**Q:** Are there any nutrients or skin care products available to help with dark circles and puffiness under the eyes?

**A:** As a dermatologist, I encounter patients who want to look younger by removing dark circles and puffiness under their eyes. Dark circles and puffiness under the eyes can be caused by several factors. The skin around the eyelid is normally extremely thin, and as we age, it becomes even thinner. In addition to individual genetic disposition, external factors such as ultraviolet radiation, pollution, and topical irritants can play a significant role in creating dark circles and puffiness. Excessive rubbing and touching of the eyelid skin will worsen the condition.



In basic physiological terms, dark circles and puffiness under the eyes indicates a problem retaining blood in the skin's upper layers. This is caused by poor or compromised hemodynamic properties and limited blood flow. If left untreated or treated inappropriately, this can lead to a build-up of venous back pressure in the tiny fine capillaries of the skin, eventually resulting in greater damage to the already compromised collagen and connective tissue. As the damage worsens, the supply of oxygen to the affected area is likewise compromised. Inflammation and an increase in the activity of proteolytic enzymes, due to ultraviolet exposure, contribute to further degeneration of the connective tissues, resulting in wrinkles and looseness of skin in the area.

To be effective, the products used to treat dark circles and puffiness under the eyes must address the physiological causes of this condition. Soy and rice bran peptides have been demonstrated to reduce venous blood clotting. They have also been shown to have a localized effect on the hemodynamic properties of blood vessels and to increase blood supply to the superficial tissue of the eyelids. Moreover, these two peptides have been shown to inhibit elastase and collagenase, which degrade collagen and elastin in the skin, thus helping the skin retain its natural firmness. Oxydoreductase and potent antioxidants, such as red and green tea, help diminish free radicals in the skin, reducing inflammation and minimizing the resulting puffiness and wrinkling around the eyes.

The active complex of soy and rice bran peptides, along with oxydoreductase and natural antioxidants, can be found in certain facial care products today. However, this nutrient complex is most commonly found in anti-aging eye care agents. These products are primarily for mature skin that is beginning to show visible signs of aging. When choosing a product to help prevent dark circles and puffiness under the eyes, make sure the product contains this complex of peptides, as well as high concentrations of potent natural antioxidants such as red and green tea. Dermatologist-formulated skin care products tend to be superior to their commercially available counterparts.

*Gary Goldfaden, MD, a clinical dermatologist and lifetime member of the American Academy of Dermatology, is founder of Academy Dermatology in Hollywood, FL, and COSMESIS Skin Care. He is also a member of the Life Extension Scientific Advisory Board.*

without first consulting your physician.