RJ SKIN LUXURY AESTHETICS

LET'S TALK RETINOIDS

RETINOL, RETINAL, RETINOIDS, TRETINOIN... WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

THIS IS YOUR GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING ONE OF SKINCARE'S MOST TRANSFORMATIVE INGREDIENTS



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FIRST, WHAT IS A RETINOID?

Retinoid is the umbrella term for a family of Vitamin A derivatives used in skincare.

These ingredients support healthy skin renewal, improve uneven texture and tone, help manage breakouts, and can soften the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

The difference? How each form is converted, delivered, and tolerated by your skin.

NOT ALL VITAMIN A IS CREATED EQUAL

THE CONVERSION PATHWAY

Retinyl Esters (3 steps)	**Retinol (2 steps)**	**Retinal (1 step)**	**Retinoic Acid (active form)**

Fewer conversion steps can mean more direct activity, but they don't automatically guarantee better results. Formulation, concentration, skin tolerance, and consistency matter.

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MEET RETINOL

THE CLASSIC SKIN-RENEWING INGREDIENT

Retinol is one of the most recognized forms of Vitamin A, known for its ability to support collagen production, improve uneven skin tone, refine texture, and soften the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

Once applied, retinol undergoes two conversion steps within the skin before becoming retinoic acid, the biologically active form that influences skin cell behavior.

What makes it special?
Retinol offers a versatile approach to skin rejuvenation. Its effectiveness depends on concentration, formulation, delivery system, and consistent use.

Best suited for:

- Early to moderate signs of aging
- Uneven texture and dullness
- Fine lines and discoloration
- Clients beginning a corrective anti-aging routine

The RJ Skin perspective: Retinol doesn't need to be the highest concentration to deliver meaningful results. A thoughtfully formulated product that your skin tolerates consistently can be more beneficial than an aggressive formula used sporadically.







Explore at RJ Skin: Face Reality Retinol Peptide Serum
Natura Bissē Essential Shock Retinol

*Skinbetter AlphaRet also belongs in the conversation, although its proprietary retinoid technology differs from conventional retinol

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MEET RETINAL (RETINALDEHYDE)

ONE STEP CLOSER TO ACTIVE VITAMIN A

Retinal, also called retinaldehyde, is a Vitamin A derivative that requires just one conversion step to become retinoic acid.

Because it's closer to the active form, retinal has the potential to provide efficient skin-renewing activity at relatively low concentrations.

What makes it special?
Retinal can help improve visible signs of aging, uneven texture, and blemish-prone skin. It has also demonstrated antibacterial activity in laboratory research, although that doesn't mean every retinal product is a clinically proven acne treatment.

Best suited for:

- Fine lines and visible signs of aging
- Uneven skin texture
- Blemish-prone or congested skin
- Clients seeking an alternative to traditional retinol

The RJ Skin perspective: Retinal isn't automatically more irritating or more effective than retinol. The entire formulation matters, including its concentration, stability, and delivery technology.

Explore at RJ Skin: Hydrinity RetaXome and Face Reality Retinal B3





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MEET TRETINOIN

THE PRESCRIPTION-STRENGTH STANDARD

Tretinoin is retinoic acid itself, meaning it does not require conversion within the skin to become biologically active.

It's one of the most extensively studied topical retinoids, with strong clinical evidence for treating acne and improving signs of photoaging.

What makes it special?
Tretinoin influences skin cell turnover and helps regulate processes involved in collagen maintenance, clogged pores, and uneven pigmentation. It can deliver significant corrective results, but its direct activity also means irritation, dryness, redness, and peeling are common—especially during the adjustment period.

Best suited for:

- Persistent acne and clogged pores
- Moderate to advanced photoaging
- Fine lines and uneven pigmentation
- Clients who need prescription-level correction



The RJ Skin perspective: Prescription strength isn't necessarily the best starting point. Even among tretinoin users, a higher percentage does not guarantee better long-term results. Tolerance, consistency, and appropriate medical oversight are essential. If you have been using AlphaRet or C-Quence for a while and you're ready for something stronger, Tretinoin is most likely right for you.

Available through appropriate prescription: Obagi Tretinoin 0.025%, 0.05%, and 0.1%

WHAT ABOUT GENTLER FORMS OF VITAMIN A?

RETINYL ESTERS

Retinyl esters are Vitamin A derivatives such as retinyl palmitate and retinyl acetate.

They typically require three conversion steps to become active retinoic acid, making them generally less directly active than retinol, retinal, or tretinoin.

What makes them special?
Retinyl esters can provide a more gradual introduction to Vitamin A, particularly in formulas designed to support skin comfort and long-term use. Their effectiveness depends heavily on the formulation, and clinical evidence for correcting photoaging is less extensive than for tretinoin.

Best suited for:

- Clients new to Vitamin A
- Skin that needs a gradual introduction
- Clients who have struggled with stronger retinoids
- Long-term maintenance routines

The RJ Skin perspective: Gentle doesn't mean unimportant. A progressive approach allows us to focus on skin tolerance, barrier health, and consistency before considering more intensive correction.

Explore at RJ Skin: Environ AVST Moisturizer and the Environ C-Quence Serum step-up system, which use Vitamin A derivatives within progressively formulated products.



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WHAT ABOUT NEXT-GENERATION RETINOID TECHNOLOGY?

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY.
BOTANICAL SCIENCE.
BEAUTIFUL RESULTS.

SKINBETTER SCIENCE | AlphaRet Overnight Cream
Advanced retinoid technology
AlphaRet combines a proprietary double-conjugated retinoid with alpha hydroxy acid technology to improve fine lines, wrinkles, texture, and uneven tone.
In a 12-week clinical study, AlphaRet demonstrated comparable improvements to prescription tretinoin for several photoaging measures, with less reported irritation.



EPIONCE | Lytic Tx + Renewal Facial Cream
Botanical science meets barrier-first skincare
Epionce takes a different approach, using carefully selected botanical ingredients and active complexes to refine texture, improve visible aging, and support a healthy skin barrier—without relying on retinoids.
In a six-month, 25-person split-face clinical study, the Lytic Tx and Renewal Facial Cream regimen produced improvements comparable to prescription 0.05% tretinoin for several visible signs of photoaging, with favorable tolerability.

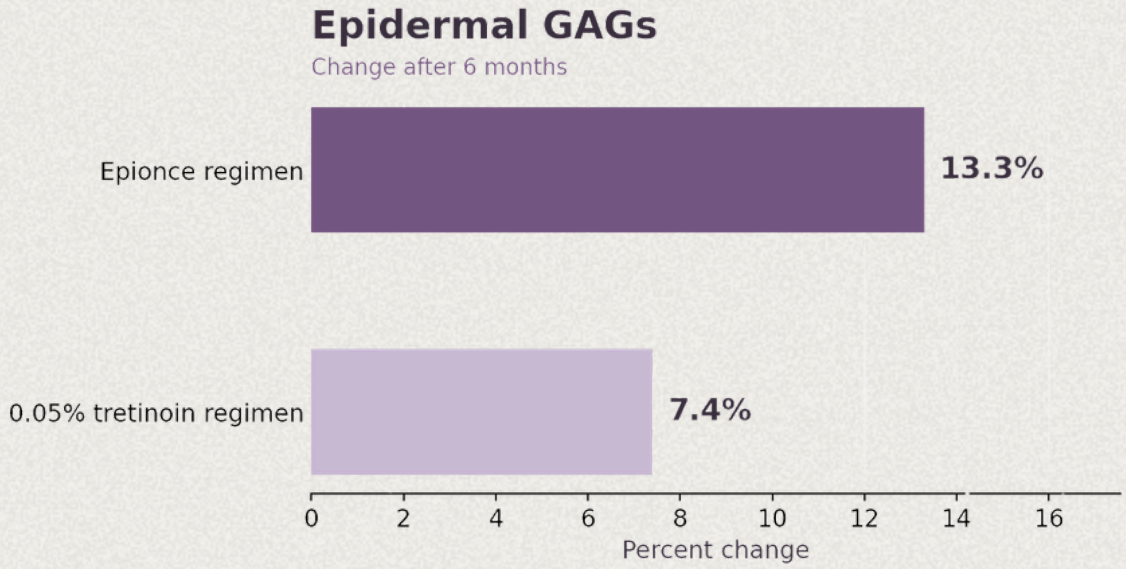


The RJ Skin perspective: Beautiful skin doesn't have to come at the expense of a healthy skin barrier. Whether through advanced retinoid technology or clinically studied botanical formulations, the goal is meaningful results with an approach your skin can tolerate.

A FASCINATING CLINICAL DETAIL WORTH SHARING

The Epionce study is especially interesting because it compared complete skincare regimens—not simply individual ingredients. Epionce demonstrated results comparable to tretinoin in a clinical study.

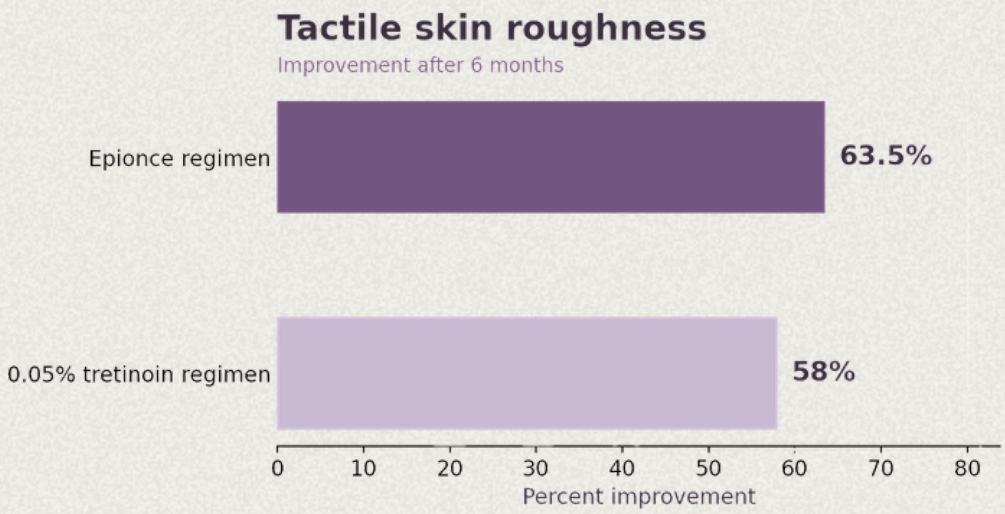
EPIONCE VS. PRESCRIPTION TRETINOIN
-after 6 months-



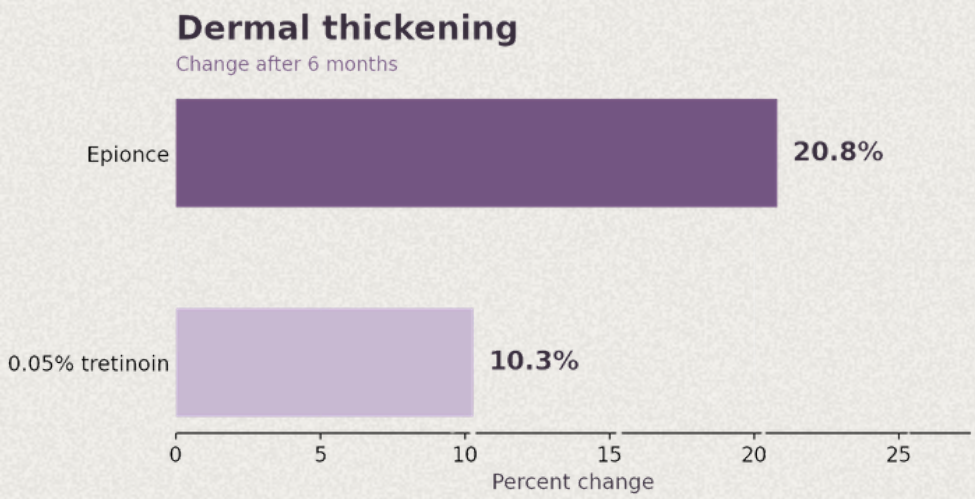
Source: Epionce clinical comparison graphic supplied by RJ Skin.

Epidermal GAGs:
Found within the extracellular matrix of the skin.
(the structural fluid surrounding cells)

While GAGs are most heavily concentrated in the deeper dermal layer, they are critically present in the epidermis (the outermost layer of skin), where they dictate hydration, cellular communication, and skin barrier function.



Source: Epionce clinical comparison graphic supplied by RJ Skin.



Source: Epionce clinical comparison graphic supplied by RJ Skin.

Source: Episciences, Inc., Comparing Epionce & Prescription Renova. Six-month, 25-participant, split-face clinical study. Data on file. Results may vary.

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WHAT IS THE BEST VITAMIN A FOR YOUR SKIN?

YOUR CONCERN	WHERE WE MIGHT START
New to Vitamin A	Environ AVST Moisturizer
Early signs of aging and prevention	Environ C-Quence Serum *or* Natura Bissé Essential Shock Retinol Night Renewal
Fine lines, wrinkles and texture	Skinbetter AlphaRet or Face Reality Retinol Peptide Serum
Visible photoaging and sun damage	Skinbetter AlphaRet, Hydrinity RetaXome, *or* prescription Obagi Tretinoin
Breakouts and congestion	Face Reality Retinal B3 *or* prescription Obagi Tretinoin
Sensitive, reactive or inflamed skin	Hydrinity RetaXome *or* Environ AVST Moisturizer
Experienced Vitamin A users	Environ C-Quence at an appropriate step-up level or Obagi Tretinoin under medical guidance

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to Vitamin A.
Let us help you discover the formula that works beautifully with your skin.

Your skin goals. Your skin tolerance. Your personalized Vitamin A.

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THE MOST FAQ

Is tretinoin better than retinol?

Not necessarily. Tretinoin has stronger clinical evidence for treating photoaging and acne, but it's also more likely to cause irritation. A well-formulated cosmetic retinoid may be more appropriate for someone with sensitive skin or a compromised barrier.

Can I use Vitamin A every night?

Eventually, many people can. But we recommend gradually building tolerance. Some clients achieve excellent results using it only a few nights per week.

Can I combine Vitamin A with Vitamin C?

Yes! Vitamin C in the morning and Vitamin A in the evening is a common pairing. The exact routine depends on the formulas and your skin's tolerance. Environ's C-Quence Serum has both Vitamin A and C!

How long until I see results?

Some changes in texture may appear within 4–8 weeks. More meaningful improvements in acne, discoloration, and fine lines often require 8–12 weeks or several months. Consistency is essential.

Can I use Vitamin A during pregnancy?

No. Topical retinoids should be avoided during pregnancy and while trying to conceive. If breastfeeding, consult your healthcare provider before use.

Environ's AVST and C-Quence 1 is pregnancy safe. If you're wanting to completely stop, try Azelaic acid, it is the best Vitamin A alternative to use while pregnant.

RJ SKIN LUXURY AESTHETICS

THE MOST FAQ

Do I need to stop Vitamin A before a facial or peel?

Possibly. Certain peels, waxing, and resurfacing procedures require adjustments to your routine. Your RJ Skin provider will guide you based on the specific treatment and retinoid you use.

Is a higher percentage always better?

No. A product's delivery system, stability, concentration, and overall formulation influence its performance. Comparing percentages across different forms of Vitamin A can be misleading.

Does Vitamin A thin the skin?

No. Vitamin A derivatives like retinol and prescription retinoids do not thin the overall structure of the skin; instead, they thicken the deeper dermal layers while temporarily refining the very outer surface.

Can retinoids damage my skin barrier?

Excessive use of anything that exfoliates or helps our skin cell turnover can disrupt barrier function and lead to dryness, burning, and irritation. Proper introduction, moisturizer, and our professional guidance help minimize this risk.

Am I too young or too old to start Vitamin A?

There's no universal starting age. Retinoids are prescribed to teenagers for acne and used by mature clients for photoaging. The decision should be based on skin needs rather than age alone.
Environ’s AVST 1 moisturizer can be used on individuals as young as 5 years old to help protect the skin from pollutants and sun damage.