

The Biggest — & Most Futuristic — Skin Trends Coming In 2019

2018 was the year you bought a [derma roller](#), learned to [respect your gut](#), tried [PRP](#) for the first time, washed your face with [sparkling water](#), and spent all your money on Tatcha just because [Meghan Markle said you should](#). Your bathroom shelves were lined with [vitamin C eye creams](#), chemical exfoliants, that ubiquitous [blue aluminum tube](#), and [The Ordinary](#) (because of course you stocked up in a panic). You let no skin-care trend, big or small, go untested, no new in-office procedure unconsidered.

But don't take that as an excuse to get complacent — not now, with the next wave just over the horizon. Instead, take your enthusiasm beyond Sephora's shelves, and go deep into the industry's biggest breakthroughs in skin care and [cosmetic surgery](#) — according to the experts who are perfecting them. Ahead, five things to expect in the near future... because Markle's days of being able to publicly recommend beauty brands are more than likely over.

Microneedling Patches

The past few years have brought us not only a surge in the popularity of [microneedling](#), but also the idea that it's something you can do yourself without developing sepsis. While buzzy, the procedure is not without its risks, which makes the advent of [microneedling patches](#) so exciting. It's the difference between rolling something that's covered in teeny-tiny needles over your face and slapping on a painless patch that does the same job without the possible side effects. The technology is already being used in the medical field, with researchers [testing flu vaccination](#) patches as an alternative to syringes.

But there's one key aspect the patches are missing from the in-office procedure: the damage inflicted by the needle, which is something you actually *want*. "The needle itself stimulates skin cells to enter repair mode, creating fresh collagen and elastin," plastic surgeon [Melissa Doft, MD](#), says. The dissolvable cones on the surface of the patches don't puncture the skin in quite the same way, meaning the active ingredients won't go as deep or produce as dramatic of results — but they're still hugely promising.

"As this technology is further developed, [it] will likely be used in more over-the-counter skin-care products and definitely improve the quality of results achievable at home," says dermatologist [Joshua Zeichner, MD](#). [Starskin](#) and [Exuviance](#) have recently jumped on board with anti-aging formulas, and Ava Shamban, MD, founder of [Ava MD](#) and the [SKINxFIVE](#) clinics, says we can expect acne treatments and neurotoxins to make their way to patches, too.

Retinol Alternatives

A class of chemical compounds derived from vitamin A, retinoids are well-recognized as the gold standard of skin-care ingredients. But as much as they're beloved for their skin-smoothing, pore-unclogging, breakout-fighting, all-around life-giving properties, they're also notorious for causing dryness, redness, and irritation. But this is 2019 we're talking about, and the long-awaited 21st-century upgrade is gentler, more versatile, and just as effective — and, in some cases, not actually a retinoid at all.

This past June, the results of [a double-blind study](#) showed that [bakuchiol](#), a botanical extract sourced from the babchi plant (commonly used in [Ayurvedic](#) medicine), produced the exact same results as pure retinol in terms of wrinkle reduction, collagen production, and hyperpigmentation fading, with significantly fewer side effects. [Ole Henriksen](#), [Biossance](#), [StriVectin](#), and [IsdinCeutics](#) have already incorporated the breakthrough ingredient into new product lines.

But while some brands are embracing the new plant-based option, others are simply opting for less potent forms of retinol to cut down on irritation. Celebrity esthetician Shani Darden chose to use [retinyl palmitate](#) in her [Texture Reform](#) serum to gently resurface over time, for slightly slower but dramatically less sensitizing results; BeautyBio's [The Nightly Retinol + Peptide Anti-Aging Serum](#) contains [hydroxypinacolone retinoate](#), a promising — but still [not quite proven](#) in terms of efficacy — retinoic-acid ester.

Injectables 2.0

Now that you've hit your forehead lines with Botox, your under-eye bags with [Restylane](#), and your cheeks with Juvederm, it's time to turn to the next frontier of injectables. And in 2019, you'll find it below the neck.

"[Fillers](#) are conquering the entire body," Dr. Doft says. Though they're only FDA-approved for the cheeks, lips, and hands, she says she's seen them used for everything from [penile enlargement](#) to scar touch-ups and cushioning of the feet. Kybella, initially developed exclusively for the submental region (a.k.a. double chin), is being used to minimize the fat that pops out over the bra; Botox is being repurposed as a way to narrow the jawline; and Restylane Lyft and Radiesse are both being used to plump hands that show significant volume loss.

Dr. Shamban credits this trend to the "decade disconnect" phenomenon, where the post-filler face looks noticeably younger than the rest of the body. "A full, spot-free face looks abnormal when the neck, chest, and hands show signs of age," Dr. Zeichner says. "We'll likely see a continued rise of products that help the skin below the neck to match that of the face."

Wellness Trends

In the past year, the wellness movement has transcended from woo-woo niche to become a legitimate player in the skin-care industry. With [adaptogens](#), hemp, and [CBD](#) quickly becoming mainstream, natural beauty has gone next level — now, it's a lifestyle. With that, we can expect to see plenty more of the anti-inflammatory, non-psychoactive cannabis compound for years to come, especially as it [inches closer to federal legality](#).

That said, there's still some regulatory confusion, as brands often use "hemp-seed oil" and "CBD oil" interchangeably, which means your CBD-labeled product might not contain any cannabinoids at all. The good news is that the topical benefits of both oils are vast. "Hemp-seed oil is rich in natural emollients that help soften the outer skin layer and provide moisturizing benefits," Dr. Zeichner says. Dr. Shamban adds that CBD oil, which contains nourishing omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, is particularly promising for photo-damaged skin. In early 2019, Sephora's best-selling brands [First Aid Beauty](#) and [Josie Maran](#) will both launch hemp-laced oils at the retailer.

All things hemp and CBD might be the *biggest* wellness-to-beauty trend, but it's far from the only one: Adaptogens are a class of plants and herbs that have traditionally been used in Ayurvedic and Chinese medicines, theoretically to help regulate the body's stress response and help it adapt to internal or external conditions, Dr. Shamban says. And they're popping up everywhere: Moon Juice has silver-ear and reishi mushrooms in its [Beauty Shroom Plumping Jelly Serum](#), and Herbivore utilizes hemp-seed oil with ashwagandha and turmeric root in its [Emerald Deep Moisture Glow Oil](#).

Customization

For all of the skin-care industry's breakthroughs and innovations, customization has never been at the forefront — but that's all changing, and fast. Both indie brands and tech-driven startups are leading the charge to individualize routines and formulas in a whole new way, and cosmetics giants (like Clinique, with its new interchangeable [iD Active Cartridges](#) system, and SkinCeuticals' in-office [Custom D.O.S.E](#) service) are quickly following suit.

[Curology](#) was one of the first (if not *the* first) company to offer a customized skin-care experience back in 2014, connecting patients with real medical providers to design an acne treatment for their specific needs. But some newer personalized skin-care systems do away with the derm entirely, relying on algorithms and artificial intelligence to provide unique formulations to each customer. Founded by a team out of Stanford University, [Proven](#) uses its own proprietary [Skin Genome Project](#) — which won MIT's 2018 Artificial Intelligence Award — to analyze everything from individual ingredient efficacy to consumer testimonials and scientific-journal reports.

Between the two approaches, there's [MDacne](#), which provides a customized acne treatment program, plus access to a dermatologist, with your monthly subscription. There's also [The Buff](#), a clean brand that uses a simple quiz to match shoppers with plant oils best-suited to their individual skin type. [Y'our](#), a newer contender, also prioritizes clean, cruelty-free ingredients, paired with proprietary data tech called SkinAI, which seems like a fair indicator of what we can expect in the coming year: If we're lucky, the future of skin care will be cleaner, greener, and smarter than ever — and fully supported by science.

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