

THE CENTER

FOR DERMATOLOGY, COSMETIC & LASER SURGERY

OUTLET: SELF MAGAZINE
DATE: OCTOBER 2014

SELF



HOW POLLUTION HARMS YOUR SKIN

We know the toll it takes on the environment, but lesser known—until now—are its adverse effects on your skin. "Pollution can cause uneven skin tone, accelerated aging and even skin cancer," says Doris Jans, professor of New York Medical College in the Department of Dermatology. Living in an environment with increased air pollution isn't the only reason we know really bad skin problems are on the rise. New York City's smoggy air is a major culprit. "Microscopic specks of pollution in the atmosphere can penetrate your skin and cause inflammation, which leads to skin conditions like acne, wrinkles, and dark spots," says Dr. Bank. "The good news is that you can take steps to protect your skin from pollution. Here are three simple steps to get you back to bloom."

past few decades, but the air surrounding us is still far from pristine. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, about 83 million tons of pollution were emitted into the air in the United States in 2012. And when that pollution comes into contact with your skin, it doesn't just sit on the surface, griming it up like it would a windshield. These

spots and wrinkling. "The sun isn't the only villain, now that we know how damaging pollution really is," says David Bank, M.D., assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital in New York City. Microscopic specks of

one

CLEAN IT OFF
We know we should wash our face, but many of us don't do it that well. "Washing your face thoroughly every day

sticky particles like soot—then washing by hand. "Think of a pollutant as a smoldering cigarette butt that's stuck in your skin, continuing to emit toxic chemicals," Dr. Bank says. "Simple washing may not be enough to remove it, but exfoliating can get those cells out of there." If you don't use a brush or your

two

NEUTRALIZE IT
When pollution gets into your skin, it creates free radicals, highly unstable molecules that have unpaired electrons. These molecules can damage your skin on their own. "They're like a matchstick, which can start a fire and burn and burn," Dr. Bank says. "The good news is that antioxidants can help neutralize these free radicals and prevent them from causing damage."

skin conditions like acne. Dr. Bank recommends using the same face wash from the A.M., but with an electronic brush. The brush is proven to more

of potentially harmful pollutants, not to mention makeup and everyday dirt and sweat. The goal is to get everything off without too much scrubbing, drying or irritation, which can exacerbate skin conditions like acne. Dr. Bank recommends using the same face wash from the A.M., but with an electronic brush. The brush is proven to more effectively remove impurities—especially

EVERYWHERE—EVEN INDOORS—BUT THE RIGHT PRODUCTS CAN HELP. YOUR GRIME-FIGHTING SUPERHEROES? CLEANSERS, ANTIOXIDANTS AND SUNSCREEN.



three

CREATE A BARRIER
You're probably already using sunscreen when it's sunny, but here's another reason to put some on every day. "Sunscreen helps create a barrier on your skin that prevents pollutants from getting in," Dr. Bank says. "It also helps to keep your skin hydrated, which is important for maintaining a healthy skin barrier."

by hand. "Think of a pollutant as a smoldering cigarette butt that's stuck in your skin, continuing to emit toxic chemicals," Dr. Bank says. "Simple washing may not be enough to remove it, but exfoliating can get those cells out of there." If you don't use a brush or your

