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### Beauty Ingredient: Activated Charcoal

One considers activated charcoal to be a trendy beauty ingredient in health and wellness in recent years. From face mask to toothpaste, activated charcoal can be found in a many local shopping stores. It's now considered to be a potent natural treatment. Activated charcoal has also made an appearance in coffee and ice cream. It is now used as a common skin care component.

Activated charcoal is a strong and special type of fine black powder made of materials like coal, coconut shells and petroleum coke. "Carbon-rich materials such as wood are burnt at very high temperatures to obtain charcoal" (Patel, 2019). To activate the charcoal, it is passed through several chemical processes. This treatment includes oxygen, steam acids and carbon dioxide among other chemicals. The activation procedure removes all impurities and creates fine black porous granules. It creates many holes and crevices on the particles of charcoal. Therefore, the complete surface area enormously increases. The remarkable enormous and porous structure of activated charcoal made it the perfect candidate for surface adsorption.

Because its dynamic adsorbent nature, the activated charcoal can trap thousands of toxins and chemical molecules. Other than the physical adsorption phenomenon, the porous structure of activated charcoal is also helpful because of its negative electrical charge" (Patel, 2019). The activated charcoal pulls at the positively charged toxins and gases. "These molecules are then

trapped inside the intricate meshwork of crevices and holes in the activated charcoal” (Patel, 2019). Thus, the toxin being absorbed in the bloodstream is prevented. The activated charcoal is not absorbed into the human body so it is eliminated from the body along with the other toxins on the surface.

Activated charcoal makes a good deep cleanser and detoxifier. It has several different uses for your skin and hair. Activated charcoal can decrease the appearance of pores. “When used as a face mask it helps remove the dirt and toxins from one’s pores” (Best Health, 2019). Which leaves one’s face feeling fresh and pores noticeable smaller. Activated charcoal is perfect for balancing oily skin. When used in a cleanser or a mask it removes unwanted oils leaving the skin ultra-smooth. Depending on how severe, the activated charcoal even deep cleans one’s skin.

Activated charcoal can also be used as a healing agent. Whether you fell and cut your knee or you were stung by a bee and became infected, activated charcoal can help make the healing process a lot faster and relieve the symptoms, it can be applied topically. It can also remove hair toxins. “A shampoo which activated charcoal can gently detox by attracting dirt and oil which is then washed away” (Best Health, 2019). Due to its gentle properties, it won’t ruin one’s hair natural moisture levels. Lastly, itchy scalp, dandruff and redness may be alleviated with activated charcoal. It works the same way with one’s scalp as it does with one’s skin.

In 2015, the International Nomenclature of Cosmetic Ingredients listed over 148 products that contained activated charcoal powder, this is a pronounced showing for an ingredient that personal care brands have been using only a few years prior. “By 2019, that number multiplied to 754 products containing charcoal powder” (How Activated Charcoal Powder Became a Hot Ingredient in Skin Care, 2020). This powder went from ancient medicine to essential modern

beauty fad and because of uncertainty to becoming a mainstream ingredient. Activated charcoal has earned its popularity in skincare.

Because of its popularity charcoal is essential addition to one's skincare routine. Despite its characteristics of being sooty and messy, charcoal leaves one's skin surprisingly clean on the surface and in your pores. "The use of charcoal for the body dates back as far as 1500 BC when Egyptians used charcoal to preserve the bodies of the dead" (PILATEN Skin Care, 2020). Throughout history charcoal was first used in medicine around 400 B.C. to treats conditions like epilepsy, vertigo and anaemia. It was also used for wounds and burns and surgical procedures when bacteria and toxins were in the body. It was recognized that charcoal could draw out disease leaving clean flesh behind. After the development of activated charcoal sometime between 1870 and 1920 it was widely used in hospitals and clinics for many different purposes. In present times, charcoal is used to absorb impurities and infections by several healthcare providers.

In conclusion, activated charcoal is the perfect beauty ingredient because it extracts dirt and grime from the pores of the skin while not being absorbed into the skin itself. Activated charcoal is a trendy ingredient in personal health; it's used in skincare, hair and dental hygiene. It's ability to remove toxicants in minutes made it increase in popularity among skincare brands. One thinks activated charcoal will be around for years and its properties will be helpful to skin remedies and health issues from now into the future.

## References

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