

Can You Really Become Addicted to Lip Balm?



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Short answer: no. “Lip balm addiction isn't an established clinical condition; there are simply many people who overuse the stuff,” says N.Y.C. dermatologist Sejal Shah. So, what's the deal? Well, it's a bit of a vicious cycle. “Some people will use lip balm so frequently that they develop a sensitivity to one of the ingredients,” says Boston dermatologist Emmy Graber. Over time, their lips begin to feel irritated and sensitive—and what do they do to treat them? They slather on more balm, explains Graber.

If this sounds like you, try switching balms to break the cycle. “Avoid products that have harsh lip exfoliating ingredients or cooling sensations,” says N.Y.C. dermatologist Joshua Zeichner. Also, steer clear of balms

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with menthol, camphor salicylic acid, fragrances and even common bases like beeswax and lanolin. “These types of ingredients may be irritating to some and can also cause dryness,” says Zeichner. Instead, opt for balms packed with skin repairing ingredients like ceramides, found in Graber and Zeichner’s favorite pick, Cerave’s Healing Ointment (\$ 11; ulta.com). If you have severe irritation, try a lip balm with 1% hydrocortisone, suggests Graber (try CortiBalm, \$5; lovelyskin.com). Another smooth move: only apply balm every few hours or after eating, suggests Shah.