

# Apparently, You Shouldn't Buy Retinols From the Drugstore—Here's Why



There's nothing more satisfying than nabbing a high-quality and effective skincare product that *also* comes in at a fraction compared to products twice, triple, or even quadruple the cost. And yes, despite the fact we definitely hoard plenty of skin fare that undoubtedly makes our wallets cringe in disapproval, we're equally appreciative of the all-star drugstore picks our budgets love us for. However, all that love and appreciation aside, strategically speaking, it's good to be on guard when selecting which products we're opting for at the drugstore and which ones we delegate for a splurge-worthy investment.

According to a recent post on [She Finds](#), most skincare stuffs like cleansers, toners, SPF, and lotions are A-okay to pick up at the drugstore. After all, brands are working harder than ever to establish authority, transparency, and innovation in the market of budget-friendly skincare that's more accessible for all. That said, the phrase "you get what you pay for" will always be true to a certain extent. As [Paul Jarrod Frank, MD](#), warned [She Finds](#), you might as well steer clear of retinol on your next Target or [Rite Aid](#) run. **The main issue? These formulas tend to be significantly less concentrated and are therefore much less effective if not useless altogether.**

"Look for Retinyl Palmitate (vitamin A) which is formed by retinol and palmitic acid," Frank suggests as an alternative option. "This combination is an antioxidant and good for the skin as well as cell turnover. Retinyl Palmitate is usually higher in concentration because the skin first has to convert it to retinol then retinoic acid in order for the skin to use it therefore this form is usually a higher concentration."

Plus, he adds, make sure the source of retinol is one of the first on the product's ingredient list—just, you know, as a sound and general rule of thumb. To be frank, in most expensive formulations, this will be the case.

Additionally, in order to preserve their potency, high-quality retinol formulas should always be stored in opaque versus clear packaging, should be kept out of excessive light or sun, and should always be shut or screwed tight. Never leave a tub or jar out in the open after application.