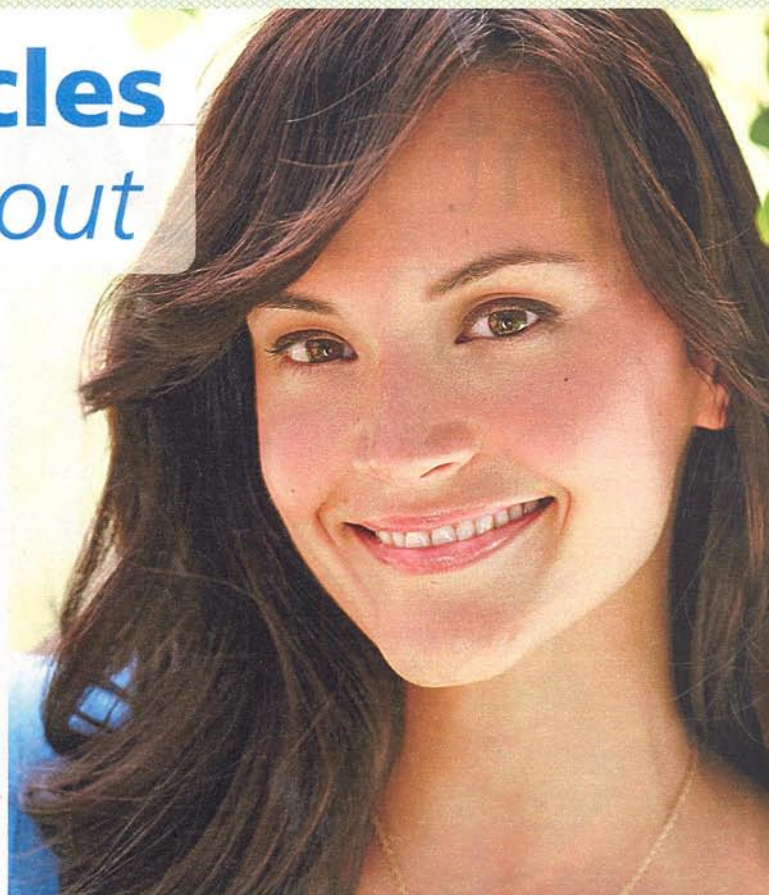


# Heal dark circles from the inside out

Yes! Choose one of these options to never look tired again

If any season is a dark circle waiting to happen, it's early fall. Hay fever, back-to-school stress and seasonal shifts all combine to make us look tired even on the few days when we're not. Sure, there's concealer, but after years of applying it daily, that gets to be an expensive hassle. Thankfully, new breakthroughs in skin science suggest that with a little patience, we can permanently erase those pesky half-moons. "Harmful UV rays break down the collagen in the delicate area under the eyes, making it thinner and more translucent," explains Ariel Ostad, M.D., a dermatologist in New York City. "This allows the dilated vessels triggered by tiredness or allergies to show through the thinned-out skin." But coax the collagen into rebuilding, and you automatically hide the blue pooled blood. Here's how:



## AT-HOME LASER

Lasers are the gold standard for rebuilding collagen, but treatments can cost a hefty \$3,750 for five in-office sessions, and the results only last about three years. That's why we were intrigued when we heard that skin-care guru Nicholas Perricone, M.D., devised a more budget-friendly option: Perricone MD Light Renewal (\$168, at [PerriconeMD.com](http://PerriconeMD.com)). This little laser (about the size and weight of a deck of cards) is designed to be used for 20 to 30 minutes a day, four times a week. "The device utilizes two parts of the light spectrum to rev up the cells that produce collagen," explains Dr. Perricone. Although the laser is primarily intended to erase crow's-feet and other fine lines (which, like dark circles, result from a breakdown of collagen), users have reported a pleasant side effect: "The dark circles under my eyes are gone. Well worth the cost—I am fighting 50 and looking 40," posted one Light Renewal user on Sephora.com. Dr. Ostad adds that at-home laser users will also likely find their skin to be more luminous and that the LED light should help eliminate hyperpigmentation. Users can expect to see some results in a few weeks, with optimal results occurring after three months.



6 weeks—  
\$168

## RETINOL CREAM

Vitamin A has consistently proven to be the go-to topical compound for stimulating collagen production. One 10-month study showed an 80 percent increase in collagen formation in participants using a topical treatment infused with vitamin A, compared with a 14 percent decrease in collagen in those using a regular cream. "Vitamin A sinks deep into the dermis and stimulates collagen-producing fibroblast cells," says Brandith Irwin, M.D., author of *The Surgery-Free Makeover* (Da Capo Press, 2008). Most women prefer creams that incorporate a form of vitamin A called retinol because it tends to produce less irritation. (An over-the-counter retinol cream that scores high in user satisfaction: Neutrogena Ageless Intensives Deep Wrinkle Eye Cream, \$22, at [drugstore.com](http://drugstore.com).) "Whichever retinol cream you chose, be sure to apply the product at night," cautions Dr. Irwin. "The sun can make vitamin A unstable, causing it to become less effective and more irritating." Also smart: Apply only once every two or three nights to allow your skin to get acclimated, then graduate to nightly application. "Retinol can have amazing results," adds Dr. Irwin. "But be patient—it can take three to six months for under-eye circles to disappear."



3 months—  
\$44