

Supersize Your Eyelashes



There are several eyelash conditioners that claim to stimulate eyelash growth, but there is a lot of important information to know upfront. Latisse is the only product that is FDA-approved. It's considered a pharmaceutical and must be prescribed by a doctor. Other eyelash condi-

tioners like Revitalash, NuLash and LILash are categorized as cosmeceuticals, or cosmetics with drug-like benefits. They do not have to undergo the same testing as drugs and are not regulated by the FDA. The cosmeceutical products can be purchased over the counter at a beauty supply store, medi-spa and even online.

ing vitamins and plant extracts. Because Latisse has had clinical studies performed and the other products have not, some dermatologists prefer Latisse. Others, however, recommend any of the products, as long as you find the one that works for you, since each person's experience will be different.

You won't see longer lashes immediately with any of these products, as it typically takes six to eight weeks to notice a difference. "Most patients will notice a lengthening at the end of the first month," said Dr. Charles E. Crutchfield III, board-certified dermatologist of Crutchfield Dermatology in Eagan, Minnesota, while "the majority of patients will achieve the desired lengthening by the end of the second month." Dr. Crutchfield recommends that, once you get the desired length and density, you apply your treatment once a week for maintenance. "You have to continue using

Your eyes are the first thing people notice when they look at your face, so they've got to look their best. Read on for everything you should know about eyelash-lengthening products before you tell your doctor or esthetician to hook you up with some.

Stimulate your real eyelashes to grow

Those of us not blessed with naturally fabulous lashes have to use gobs of mascara, extensions or even falsies to maximize their effect. Now there are new products on the market promising to grow your real eyelashes longer, fuller and darker than ever. But do these work?

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Botox makers Allergan discovered Latisse accidentally when bimatoprost, the active ingredient in the prescription glaucoma drug Lumigan, gave patients lush eyelashes as a side effect. That drug was then spun off into the prescriptive eyelash lengthener Latisse. Revitalash, NuLash and LILash do not contain bimatoprost but use different combinations of ingredients, includ-





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it," said Dr. Bruce Katz, dermatologist and director of Juva Skin and Laser Center in New York City, "otherwise they go back to the way they were before."

Makeup artist Patricia Shelden in Mission Viejo, California, had long but sparse eyelashes. She tried RevitaLash and noticed a difference in three weeks. "I applied a single coat at the base of my eyelashes on the top lashes every night before bedtime for three months," said Patricia. "Now, I just do occasional touchups once every couple of weeks."

Tracey Jordan, of New York City, has been using Latisse for about five months and has tips to share. "You have to be careful not to get it into your eye," Tracey said. "You get two brushes per use. You don't want to transfer irritations from one eye to another, so definitely use the two brushes." Tracey applies Latisse carefully and sparingly and uses a handheld fan to dry each eye. So far she's experienced occasional dryness around her eyelids and a darkened line on her eyelid, "But I wear eyeliner anyway," she said.

Lash lengtheners cost between \$150 and \$200 for a one-month supply. Generally they are applied once per day, but Dr. Julia Tatum Hunter, dermatologist and founder of Skin Fitness Plus in Beverly Hills, California, takes a more conservative approach. She recommends applying the product every other or every third day (to lessen the chances of irritation) and using vitamin supplements. "To help products work better," said Dr. Hunter, "use B-100 vitamins once or twice a day. It makes hair, skin and nails grow faster."

Possible side effects

Possible side effects of lash lengtheners include eye itching, redness and irritation as well as hyperpigmentation or darkening of the eyelid. "The darker your skin, the more likely you are to have hyperpigmented changes," said ophthalmic plastic surgeon Dr. David Schlessinger, whose practice, Schlessinger Eye and Face, is based in Woodbury, New York. "At the first sign of pigment changes, discontinue the

product and see your doctor for further recommendations," the doctor advised.

One potentially permanent side effect includes darkening of the color of the iris or freckles in the iris, which is more of a risk for light-colored eyes. "Most patients with darker skin have brown eyes," said Dr. Oanh Luring, chief of dermatology at Mercy Medical Center in Baltimore. "So they are less likely to see any eye color change." Keeping the product out of your eye and using a small amount (so it doesn't drip) also helps.

Those who are pregnant, breastfeeding or have eye problems such as glaucoma or skin irritations of the eyelid are not ideal candidates for lash lengtheners. It is a good idea to have your eyes examined by a professional before using eyelash enhancers so that if any problems or side effects occur you can better pinpoint them.

Learn about your product's ingredients and side effects and obtain it from a reputable source to reduce your chances of negative side effects. **E**