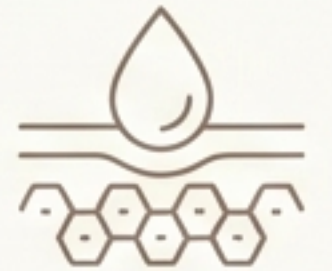


# The Ordinary

## Niacinamide 10% + Zinc 1%

A Clinical Dossier: Dermatologist Insights,  
Efficacy Timelines, and Usage Protocols



SkinOptimizer.com Beauty Guides

# THE CLINICAL EDITORIAL: PUBLIC VS. REALITY

## THE PUBLIC BUZZ



A \$6 formula (30ml) widely celebrated for transforming thousands of skin journeys.



Proved that effective niacinamide doesn't require a \$50+ price tag.

## THE CLINICAL REALITY



Analyzed across 12 clinical studies and 6,000+ consumer reviews.



### THE CATCH:

The 10% concentration is actually

10% Concentration

Clinical Standard (2-5%)

Double to Triple Strength

Optimized Range

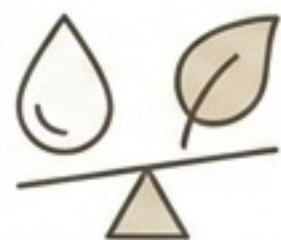
Implication:

Highly Powerful

Meaningful Risk of Irritation (Minority of Users)

Requires skin tolerance testing.

# THE CONCENTRATION SCALE: POWER VS. TOLERANCE



## 2-5% — The Clinical Sweet Spot

Delivers ~80% of optimal oil-control and brightening benefits with significantly lower irritation risk.



## 10% — The High-Power Zone

Offers aggressive sebum regulation, but carries a distinct risk of flushing, tightness, or breakouts for sensitive and dry skin profiles.

# THE OPTIMIZER'S EDGE: SYNERGISTIC SEBUM CONTROL

## Niacinamide 10%

Regulates sebum production at the source, reduces local inflammation, and inhibits melanosome transfer to fade dark spots.

## Zinc PCA 1%

Actively inhibits 5-alpha-reductase—the specific enzyme that converts testosterone to DHT and triggers excess oil production.



## The Synergy

A targeted, dual-pathway reduction in oiliness that neither ingredient achieves alone at these concentrations.

# THE EFFICACY TIMELINE: WHEN TO EXPECT VISIBLY VISIBLE RESULTS



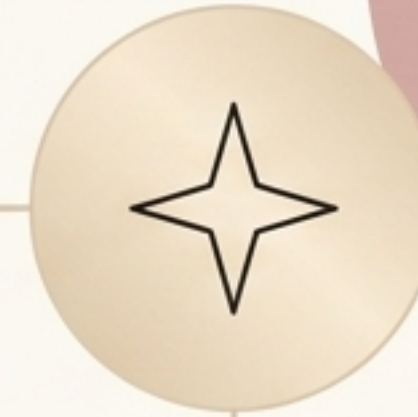
## 3-7 Days: Oil Control

Noticeable reduction in daily shine. The formula regulates sebum directly rather than just masking it with mattifying agents.



## 4-8 Weeks: Pore Refinement

Visible improvement in the appearance of pores. (Note: Pores cannot physically shrink, but reducing sebum and improving skin elasticity minimizes their appearance).



## 8-12 Weeks: Tone & Texture

Gradual fading of dark spots and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation (the dark marks left after acne heals).

# Skin Type Diagnostic Match



## ✓ Perfect For:

- **Oily & Combination Skin:** Unmatched sebum-regulating effect at this price.
- **Acne-Prone Profiles:** Helps prevent new breakouts by controlling oil and reducing inflammation.
- **Enlarged Pores:** Visibly improves texture over 4-8 weeks.



## ✗ Proceed with Caution / Skip If:

- **Very Dry Skin:** The intense oil-regulating effect can worsen tightness and dryness.
- **Very Sensitive Skin:** The 10% concentration may trigger stinging or flushing.
- **Active, Severe Acne:** Niacinamide is a supporting ingredient, not a primary medical treatment.

# The Application Protocol



# Addressing the 'Pilling' Phenomenon

## The Cause:

**Pilling** (when the product balls up on the skin) occurs because Zinc PCA can form a surface residue when layered incorrectly or applied too thickly.

## The Prevention Protocol:

- ✓ Apply only to damp skin to enhance absorption.
- ✓ Streamline your routine (use fewer layered products).
- ✓ Wait 2-3 full minutes before applying heavy makeup or sunscreen over the serum.

# Common Application Mistakes



**Over-Application:** Using more than 1-2 drops. (A single bottle should last 4-6 months; more product does not equal faster results).



**Bone-Dry Application:** Applying to completely dry skin, which decreases absorption and increases pilling.



**Inconsistent Usage:** Failing to commit to the twice-daily, 8+ week timeline required for visible changes in hyperpigmentation.



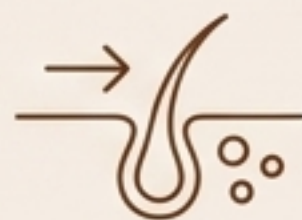
**Active Conflicts:** Mixing with Vitamin C, AHAs, or BHAs in the exact same application step without assessing skin tolerance.

# Safety Notes: Expected Reactions vs. Irritation



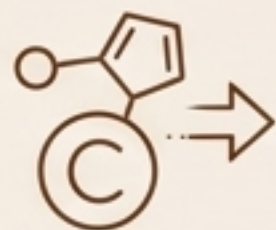
## The Niacin Flush:

Temporary facial redness and warmth, especially for new users. This is a normal reaction that typically subsides within 30 minutes.



## Purging vs. Breakouts:

As pores clear, an initial 'purge' phase lasting 2-4 weeks is common. However, if breakouts continue beyond 6 weeks, the 10% concentration is likely causing irritation.



## Vitamin C Conflicts:

Simultaneous application may cause temporary flushing. Dermatologists recommend splitting routines (e.g., Vitamin C in the AM, Niacinamide in the PM) for sensitive skin.



## The Pro-Tip: The eranic The Dilution Hack

### The Problem:

For many users with sensitive or slightly dry skin, the 10% formulation is simply too strong for direct application.

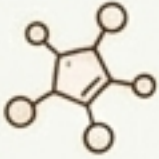



### The Hack:

Dispense your daily moisturizer into your palm, add 1-2 drops of the niacinamide serum, mix, and apply together.

### The Result:

This artificially reduces the concentration to the gentler ~2-5% clinical sweet spot. It retains core sebum-regulating benefits while protecting the skin barrier from irritation.

# The Actives Ecosystem: Choosing Your Primary Tool

 Active Ingredient	 Primary Benefit	 Typical Concentration	 Price Range
Niacinamide + Zinc	Sebum control, pore appearance	10% + 1%	~\$6
Vitamin C	Brightening, collagen support	15-20%	\$15-50
Retinol	Anti-aging, cellular turnover	0.1-1%	\$10-65
Salicylic Acid (BHA)	Active acne, deep congestion	1-2%	\$8-25

# Dermatologist-Recommended Alternatives



Best for Sensitive Barriers  
CeraVe Niacinamide Toner (\$14)

Features a gentle 4% concentration paired with ceramides and hyaluronic acid. Ideal for easily irritated skin.



Best for Customization  
Paula's Choice Booster (\$39)

A premium 10% booster designed specifically to be mixed flawlessly into other products without conflicting ingredients.



Best for Pure Hydration  
Cosrx Snail Mucin 96 (\$25)

Often compared for combination skin; utilizes 96% snail mucin to provide intense hydration without the aggressive oil-control mechanics.

# Your Clear Skin Protocol



## Phase 1: The Introduction

Start with **once-daily** application, preferably in the evening, to assess baseline skin tolerance.



## Phase 2: The Damp-Skin Method

**Commit** to applying only 1-2 drops to damp skin, waiting exactly 60 seconds, and locking it in with moisturizer.



## Phase 3: The Evaluation

Maintain consistent usage for a full 8-12 weeks before making final judgments on pore refinement and hyperpigmentation fading.

# The Final Verdict: Is It Worth the Hype?

**For Oily, Combo & Acne-Prone Skin: Absolutely.**

At \$6, it is an unmatched, highly affordable clinical tool for regulating sebum, minimizing the appearance of pores, and fading post-acne marks.

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**For Dry & Very Sensitive Skin: Proceed with caution.**

The intense sebum-regulating effect can worsen dryness. Utilize the 'Dilution Hack' or opt for gentler 2-5% formulations to protect your skin barrier.