



Your Functional Medicine Expert®
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[#57: Dr. Jill interviews Dr. Trevor Cates: Gut-Skin Connection and Skin Microbiome](#)

Dr. Jill 00:12

Hey everybody, good afternoon! I am excited to be here with my friend, Dr. Trevor Cates. We were just comparing ski stories because we both live in ski areas and love to ski. And at least here in Boulder, Colorado, gosh, if you've been watching the news, it's like the snowstorm of the decade. I think we got over two feet in some places. Unfortunately, the roads were all closed, so I wasn't able to get up to the slopes. But we do share a love for those slopes. And you're in Park City, right, Dr. Cates?

Dr. Trevor Cates 00:41

Yes, I am. I know. I'm so jealous. We didn't get all the snow that you guys got.

Dr. Jill 00:46

What's always great is when it's like, "Powder day!—I'm out." Oh, it's so funny. I have one employee who likes to ski and I'm like, "If it ever has a really great powder day, secretly, 'Dr. Jill and Natalie are sick' and we're going to be on the slopes." It hasn't happened yet. But anyway.

Dr. Jill 01:03

Well, thank you guys for joining me. Just a few housekeeping things. You know you can find all of our old videos on my YouTube channel, which is just under my name, Jill Carnahan. You can find all of these recordings if you've missed any of them. And my new podcast is now launched, so you can find me on iTunes and pretty much anywhere podcasting is happening. I'm there and you can find all these episodes there. Here on Facebook, you can watch this. It'll be recorded. So if you miss the first part, you can come back.

Dr. Jill 01:31

Today, I am super excited about my guest, Dr. Trevor Cates. We've known each other for probably over a decade [and have] gone in the same circles and everything. Today we're going to talk about skincare, particularly how the microbiome and skincare relate—the gut-skin connection. So we're going to dive

into all things skincare-related. I know Dr. Cates and I both want to live vibrantly, healthy, and well.

Dr. Jill 01:56

The more important thing is... Not that there's anything wrong with visiting a plastic surgeon, but for me, I want to be vibrantly living from within so that I show a glow on the outside. But it comes from this way of lifestyle and even the kind of products that we're going to talk about, because these things all matter. And I know most of you women—maybe some of you men watching—are going to really enjoy some of the tips and tricks that you hear from Dr. Cates today on how to optimize your skin. Because, as we'll talk about, Dr. Cates, it's kind of this mirror. She talks about the mirror from within. So we'll dive into that. I want to briefly introduce her and then, without further ado, we'll jump right in.

Dr. Jill 02:34

Dr. Trevor Cates is the bestselling author of the book *Clean Skin from Within*. I'll be sure to leave a link here and in all of the avenues where you might find this show for that book if you want to purchase your own copy. She's the founder of Spa Doctor, a natural skincare line. She received her medical degree from the National University of Natural Medicine and was one of the first women licensed as a naturopathic doctor in the state of California. She currently lives in Park City, Utah, where she helps patients from around the world achieve naturally glowing skin. She's been featured in various TV shows, including *The Doctors* and *Extra TV*. She has interviewed over 250 experts on the Spa Doctor podcast and hosted her own PBS special, *Younger Skin from Within*. She believes the key to healthy skin is inner and outer nourishment with natural and non-toxic ingredients.

Dr. Jill 02:34

Welcome, Dr. Cates! It's so good to have you here and to connect again. I would love to just start out by [asking]: How did you get into this realm? Tell us a little about your backstory of how you got here.

Dr. Trevor Cates 03:36

Yes, absolutely. Thank you so much for having me. It's so great to be here talking about skin. It was interesting. I've been seeing patients as a naturopathic physician for 21 years. Really, when I was at the Waldorf Astoria Spa and I was running these

two-week weight loss programs—this was about 10 years ago—and at the end of the two weeks, the patients would say: "Dr. Cates, I've lost the weight. I feel great. But what surprises me is my skin. I didn't know my skin could look," just like you were talking about, "so vibrant, so healthy." And their skin issues were going away. But also, they just noticed a more vibrant glow about their skin. And to me, it made sense. So I said, "Of course, your skin is an outer reflection of overall health."

Dr. Trevor Cates 04:28

But with so many people saying how surprised they were, I realized that oftentimes people look at the conventional approach to skin when they have a skin problem to do something topical to suppress it or for women to wear more makeup to hide different things. But I wanted people to realize that skin is actually an outer reflection of our overall health. It actually ties into my own personal journey and what led me to become a naturopathic physician. As a child, I had a lot of allergies and a lot of health issues that showed up on my skin. That was one of the things that flared up the most: Itchy rashes, mysterious bumps, hives, and eczema. I was reactive to everything.

Dr. Trevor Cates 05:18

My parents took me to see a lot of different conventional doctors. I would have allergic reactions or adverse reactions to everything. So I was this sort of difficult case for a lot of them. I remember even at one point, one of the doctors said, "You're just going to have to move because she's allergic to everything" in Virginia, where I was growing up. So thankfully, my parents didn't give up and they kept searching and they actually eventually found a holistic practitioner that they took me to. And what I realized after that is that I had this incredible recovery from my skin, my allergies, and my overall health issues. I felt healthier and more vibrant. It showed up on my skin.

Dr. Trevor Cates 06:08

And when you have skin issues—for anyone who has struggled with skin issues—it can really affect your self-esteem. I remember, as a child, being so embarrassed by the skin things that I would have. I didn't feel like a normal kid. So when it cleared up, not only did I physically feel better—and [with] that itching and all of that—but I also felt more confident in my own skin. So I remember also thinking, "Why did I have to go through all of this for a holistic approach to be presented? Why did I

have to go through all the struggle? Why wasn't it just presented as everything else was presented to us?" And that's kind of like [inaudible] this passion in me at a young age.

Dr. Trevor Cates 06:52

When I found out about naturopathic medical school later on, I thought, "Okay, this is what I want to do so that I can help other people hopefully avoid these painful paths and go into more of an integrative holistic path." So it came in full circle. When I was at the Waldorf Astoria, I realized: "I really need to write this book on skin because our skin is our magic mirror. It gives us great clues about our health." It's often one of the early warning signs that shows up for our health. When we look at our skin and the issues, especially chronic skin issues, or even just the sort of dullness, just not that vibrancy of our skin, there's something behind it. And I could talk more about the root causes behind that. But things like inflammation, gut microbiome, nutritional deficiencies, hormone imbalances, blood sugar issues, and oxidative damage—these are really the root causes behind so many skin issues. And, of course, you know that they're related to so many other health issues. So there's this connection there.

Dr. Jill 08:06

Oh, gosh. Thank you for sharing. And I'm sorry you had to go through that. But gosh, what a beautiful thing to have that transformation and then the information and to bring that with passion, because you know what it's like. I so understand, Trevor, because I grew up with eczema, allergies, and skin issues galore. I grew up on a farm and the farm was [primarily] corn and soybeans. And [there was] probably mold on those corn, soybeans, and so many things. And like your parents, my parents at one point were like, "This farm is killing you" in the sense of how much it was harming my health and all of the things in the environment. But probably gut, which we'll talk about, and nutritional imbalances and things were also the underlying causes.

Dr. Jill 08:42

And in the same way, my parents finally took me to a chiropractor who knew some nutrition. Those were the kinds of things that helped me. And it's funny; I was just talking to someone earlier today about my journey. I remember that chiropractor telling me: "Jill, you could go into chiropractic medical school or any of these

realms. But I actually think you should maybe go to allopathic medicine and start to shift the conversation." Because my heart was the heart of a naturopath, just like you. I felt like there's so much value—and probably more value—in some of these more natural ways of healing, which are what we both use nowadays. But as we kind of shift the story and bring awareness out, it's so important because a medication isn't going to clear your skin up from the inside out and cause any permanent change.

Dr. Trevor Cates 09:23

Yes. And I can say that I grew up on a farm and mold was definitely an issue in our house. In fact, I couldn't leave anything on the floor. I lived in the basement of our house. I couldn't leave anything on the floor because if I left a doll or something on the floor or a stuffed animal for more than a day, it would have mold growing on it.

Dr. Jill 09:49

Wow! Oh my gosh! Now, that's what I tell patients now. They have [things] like fruit in a basket on the counter or shoes in their closet and they get moldy. Well, that's a pretty good sign. Wow. And it's interesting. I have to take a little tangent on this because, of course, I love to talk about mold. Mold wrecked my skin. I had horrible cystic acne. Sometimes in lectures, I show the pictures and people just gasp when they see my face because it is just completely covered. It's kind of a miracle that I can now have clear skin after all that I've been through.

Dr. Jill 10:16

But our skin is resilient and mold is such a trigger. C4A, which is one of the split complement products that causes massive inflammation, is known to cause cystic acne. So it's no wonder that people have trouble, even as adults, in an environment where there's a toxin like that. So you just mentioned some really great categories. I'd love to just dive briefly into all those, [including] the gut and oxidative stress. And do you want to talk about some of these underlying factors and just dive into each one just a little bit?

Dr. Trevor Cates 10:43

Yes, absolutely. When I was doing research for my book, I was going back and looking at patterns in my patients. I discovered that there are six root causes behind skin issues. I talk about them all in my book, but I also realized that not everybody has all six of these issues. So I actually created an online skin quiz so

people can go and take that. It's TheSkinQuiz.com. I created different skin types. I actually gave them all human names because, like you, we see our patients as people, not just a skin issue or a health issue. They're Amber, Olivia, Sage, Emmett, and Heath. They're these skin personality types. The way I categorized them was based on several root causes. I encourage people to take that because sometimes it's going to be a bit overwhelming when we talk about all of the root causes.

Dr. Trevor Cates 10:43

We probably don't even have time to talk about all of them today, but I do think it would be great to talk about the microbiome. I definitely want to dive into that one today because there is so much really fascinating research unfolding about the microbiome. And just for people who aren't familiar with what the microbiome is, we have these different areas of the body where we have these microorganisms that live in, on, and protect [it]. In a healthy state, in a balanced state, they can help restore health and maintain health. But when they get out of balance, that's part of one of the big triggers that happen. So a lot of what we talk about with the skin is the skin microbiome and the gut microbiome because the gut microbiota, when that is out of balance, can cause imbalances in all the microorganisms that live on the skin.

Dr. Trevor Cates 12:36

Now, the microorganisms that live on the skin are very different than the ones that live on the gut for obvious reasons. Our skin is exposed; it's exposed to the air. One of the biggest functions of our skin is to provide a barrier to the outside world, so it needs to have certain microorganisms that help protect our skin from the environment that we live in. But what's also very fascinating about that is that what's around us very much impacts our skin, [such as] who we live with, if we have pets in the home, our hygiene practices, whether we use lots of bleach and Clorox and things like that, cleaning agents, or whether we live on a farm or in an urban environment.

Dr. Trevor Cates 13:22

There are so many different factors in our environment that play a role externally as well. So when we're looking at the skin microbiome and helping it in its resilient state, we want to do both internal and external support. I really do think that [for] the majority of the root causes, some more than others want to come about it from

this approach of internal and external. I know from experience. For many years, basically 10 years of my naturopathic medical practice, I focused exclusively from the inside out and helping people with skin problems. But then, when I was researching for my book and I was looking at creating my skincare line, The Spa Doctor skincare line, I started to realize the importance of also putting things on the skin, that we can't just do it all from the inside out. And a lot of it does come from that. But we also need to be mindful of what we put on the skin. So it's really a two-part [approach]. If you only do the external or you only do the internal, you're really missing out. And when I made that connection with my patients and started using both internal and external approaches, that's when I really saw the difference happening.

Dr. Jill 14:38

Wow, I love that. I want to talk about how, in your book, you have kind of a two-week program of how to start to shift. Then I want to talk about ingredients, skincare, and what we have to watch. A lot of people don't know that what they're putting on their skin is toxic or what to avoid. So let's start with: Where would you start with your clients—on a few weeks—to start in this process of getting clear skin?

Dr. Trevor Cates 14:58

Yes, absolutely. In my book, I lead people through a two-week program. There are four different aspects of the program. There is clean plate, clean slate, clean body, and clean mind. The clean plate section has to do with the foods that we eat. And we want to think that, of course, food is medicine, right? [Depending on] what we choose to eat, we can either trigger the root causes—like inflammation or gut microbiome imbalances—or we can actually use food as medicine to help address them. So eating anti-inflammatory foods rather than more pro-inflammatory foods or foods that help support the gut microbiome, like high-fiber plant-based foods and eating a diverse variety of produce and things like that—we know that helps support the gut microbiome. Of course, a really important part of it is the food—the clean plate portion.

Dr. Trevor Cates 16:01

But there's also the clean slate—just like I mentioned, what we put on our skin. There are certain things that we want to avoid that are actually toxic to our bodies overall. We could talk more about that as well. But there are also things that can

create imbalances with the skin microbiome that we put on the skin. And for some of these things, we think we're doing a really good job; we're using natural products. But yet, they can still disrupt the skin microbiome.

Dr. Trevor Cates 16:31

The third part is about a clean body because it's not just about what we put on our skin but also what else is in our environment that could be toxic to us or trigger more of these root causes and help support our body's detoxification pathways. A lot of times, when people think of detoxification, they think of the liver or maybe the kidneys. But the skin is also a really important detoxification organ: We perspire and sweat through the skin. That's one of the ways we get toxins out of the body. So our bodies are so wisely designed to get toxins out. We want to do things to support.

Dr. Trevor Cates 17:08

And then the clean mind section is about stress management and mindfulness practices because stress can be toxic to the body. If we don't manage it well, then it can be a contributing factor to especially inflammatory skin issues, triggering [and] increasing cortisol and that inflammatory response that happens. I like to talk about all four of these. I know a lot of times people just want to talk about food; they want to just talk about skincare products. But before we dive into talking more about skincare, I do want people to know that it's this overall approach that gives you the best results.

Dr. Jill 17:49

Gosh, I couldn't agree more because the diet is huge. But again, if you have a toxic living situation, toxic chemicals, or are using the wrong products, every single piece there matters. It's interesting, as you're going I have questions that I think the audience would want to know on each section. There are a few things. First of all, foods. People always want to know, are there any foods... Obviously, in my practice with autoimmunity and environmental toxicity, gluten is usually a no-go for most people. Are there a few foods that you're like, "These are generally good for clear skin to totally avoid?" What are your thoughts on, say, gluten, dairy, or sugar? What are some of the things [where] you'd say, "Generally for clear skin, you want to mostly avoid these foods"?

Dr. Trevor Cates 18:25

All right. Well, I think it's important, first of all, to have a great relationship with food. I never like to think of food as bad. Nothing is bad. It's just that certain things are better for our skin than other things. We do know that sugar is one of these triggers for inflammatory skin conditions and also for acne and accelerated aging. Accelerated aging causes glycation issues if you're eating too much sugar or your blood sugar is just as elevated and not in a balanced state. Also, it really can trigger acne breakouts too. It's just overall inflammatory.

Dr. Trevor Cates 19:05

You also mentioned gluten and that is definitely another big one that I oftentimes see. Now, I'm not necessarily saying it's the thing for everyone, but it is one of the more common ones. In my book, I talk about 10 different ones. But I think if you want to just narrow down and start with a few different ones to maybe start eliminating and see if these could be triggers for you, I would say sugar, gluten, and dairy. Those are three of the big ones.

Dr. Jill 19:38

I totally agree. I love what you're saying too. I always hate putting people in a box, making the box smaller, and restricting and causing disordered eating. But there is a general trend to inflammation that we see these foods often associated [with]. So I like that we've clarified that. Now, clean slate—what I thought about now with our post-COVID in the middle of figuring out this pandemic [are] a couple of things. First of all, we're putting alcohol all over our skin and all over our bodies. My take is that alcohol is really not good for our skin and it destroys the natural microbiome.

Dr. Jill 20:11

So, the two things I would love your thoughts on are alcohol products and some of these products and cleansers that may not be helpful. And also mask and maskne. We may not always have a choice in public wearing or not wearing that. But any tips on both the stuff that we're using to sanitize our environment and hands and how that affects our skin and then what we're doing to our face by having these artificial materials on our face?

Dr. Trevor Cates 20:38

Yes, I know. It's definitely a challenging one because the alcohol and the hand sanitizers are there to kill off—

Dr. Jill 20:49

Our healthy microbiome, in a way, and all the viruses too. But we actually destroy some of the healthy protection.

Dr. Trevor Cates 20:57

Yes, so I would say to try and use them minimally. When you're out and about and you can't wash your hands, then use hand sanitizers. When you do use hand sanitizers, try to use the ones that don't have a bunch of other ingredients and also have aloe. Aloe is naturally hydrating; you can usually find those. But check the ingredient list because, a lot of times, they have fragrances and a lot of other things that we don't need.

Dr. Trevor Cates 21:27

And I do want to remind people that hand washing is actually better than using a hand sanitizer for multiple reasons. It's actually safer for you in protecting you against the bad bugs while also helping maintain your healthy microbiome. It's a better choice. So [I recommend] using just basic soap and water on your hands and then saving the hand sanitizers for when you absolutely can't get to a bathroom and need to use them. And maybe even carry your own so if somebody says, "Here, use the one in our store," say: "I've got my own. I've got mine." That way, you know what's in it because some of these are kind of scary, honestly, the ones that are out there. But of course, we want to respect all of the regulations out there and be able to go out and about. There's all of that.

Dr. Trevor Cates 22:23

And I do want to talk about masking, but let's talk some more about cleansing because it is one of the things that we tend to overdo—hygiene practices. So when you're at home, you don't need to be using these hand sanitizer products. You're in your own environment so you don't have to use these. But people are oftentimes still overdoing it. And we're talking about hands here and hygiene. But we also want to talk about the face because this is one of the areas that we want to protect. Hey, we're all planning on living longer so we want our skin to be able to keep up with us, right? We're feeling great, and we're eating healthy, but let's maintain our skin too.

Dr. Trevor Cates 23:06

A lot of people are using cleansers on their faces that actually disrupt the skin microbiome and strip the skin. Foaming sudsy kinds of cleansers [and] that squeaky clean feeling that people are used to feeling is not a good thing because it's stripping away these natural oils. Our skin does best with a mild acidity to it, whereas a lot of cleansers and a lot of soaps and face washes have a high pH so it disrupts that natural mild acidity, which then disrupts the skin microbiome.

Dr. Trevor Cates 23:48

What does that mean? Well, that's going to mean your skin is more likely to be more sensitive to breaking out in various things, [such as] acne, eczema, and premature aging. So it really needs that support. When we start our skincare routine with a foamy, sudsy cleanser, we're just depleting it. So I recommend people instead use a more oil-based cleanser that has a mildly acidic [cleanser]. Like, 4.6 to 5 is more of an ideal, under 5.5. If you test a lot of cleansers with a pH strip, as well as moisturizers, you'll see that a lot of them have a higher pH, which doesn't support your natural skin pH and microbiome. So that's an important part in skincare, just starting with that step of using a really good cleanser.

Dr. Trevor Cates 24:51

And I would say, just as someone who has a history of eczema—and I still have that tendency to sensitive skin—what I notice is that with all these hand sanitizers and even washing my hands more, I was starting to get some eczema on my hands and my skin was so dry. So when I'm at home, I actually use my face cleanser on my hands because it's this oil-based cleanser and it is so much more hydrating to my skin. My skin still feels clean but without being stripped. So it's important to maintain that barrier function of your skin. And when you start to get eczema or anything, that means that your skin barrier functions are breaking down. And when we talk about the gut we call that leaky gut but when talking about the skin, we can actually have leaky skin.

Dr. Jill 25:43

Oh yes. And that's classic. With both of you and I having eczema, we're prone to that. So I want to dive into [the topic of the] gut next. Thanks so much for clarifying. Just a couple of things: We're going to dive into [the topic of] the gut. We're going to talk about your product line. But I did want to mention that—I didn't plan on bringing this up, but we're talking about hand sanitizer—I do have one. I put a link

there and it contains hemp oil, coconut oil, aloe extract, and hyaluronic acid. I have this all over my office. And like Dr. Cates said, when I'm at home, I'm not even using this. I'm using regular soap and water. Or I love the idea of using your cleanser. But if you're out and about and want something in your purse or your office, I did include a link to my foaming hand sanitizer, which is really moisturizing compared to the other ones out there. So you can check that out.

Dr. Jill 25:43

So let's dive into the gut and then I want people to hear about your product line. So let's talk just briefly about the gut. And of course, we could spend two hours on SIBO and SIFO and dysbiosis and yeast and all that. But let's just touch on: Do you recommend any probiotics specifically? Or the gut and skin—why is that so important? You and I both know that's true.

Dr. Trevor Cates 26:47

Yes, absolutely. I did promise I would mention some tips on maskne, so I don't want to forget about that too. I have a blog on my website, The Spa Doctor. People can go and read that.

Dr. Jill 27:00

Oh, we will include that link. So I'll get that from you and we'll include that as well.

Dr. Trevor Cates 27:05

Okay, perfect, because I know there's so much to cover. And the gut is so important, as are skin reactions overall. A lot of times, even people with maskne forget about their gut health. And if they tend to get more of that, you might want to take a look at your gut. So let's talk about that. Definitely, with my patients, it's one of the things that I often test with skin issues. I see that when people have chronic skin problems, they oftentimes have gut dysbiosis issues as well.

Dr. Trevor Cates 27:40

So, a lot of it has to do with helping support gut health with a healthy diet and getting, like I said, plenty of fiber and lots of variety in produce. What we found is that if we eat the same things all the time, even if we're eating a lot of vegetables, if we're not eating a variety, we're missing out on more diversity of nutrients. But it also helps with the gut microbiome. So [it's about] trying different things, getting creative and really getting in those fiber-rich foods.

Dr. Trevor Cates 28:18

And then there are the prebiotic-rich foods as well as the probiotic-rich foods, which I'm sure that you talk to people about. And then, if that's not enough, look into things like prebiotic probiotic supplements. Those can be helpful. And if you're trying to do it on your own and you're still not getting results, then work with a functional medicine doctor or a naturopathic physician who can do some testing to find out what exactly is going on because you might have some imbalances that need some really specific treatment.

Dr. Jill 28:54

Yes, this can go really deep, so you can start some things on your own. A couple of caveats that I've learned when treating the gut are that if you have trouble, I love food first. I love that you're talking about that, Dr. Cates. And I would agree. The one caveat is that if you have histamine issues—and histamine issues trigger skin issues, like they do in me—then fermented foods, sometimes bone broths and things that would typically be really good nourishing gut foods can be a trigger for you. So just be aware that just because someone says bone broth is good for everybody or kefir is really good for everybody, if you have histamine issues, just be aware that if you feel like you're flaring, that may be an underlying thing. Even certain probiotics with *Lactobacillus casei* can be shown to raise histamine, whereas *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* or *Bifidobacter* are shown to lower it. And sporebiotics are usually a good idea for almost anyone. So those are little caveats. If you're struggling, find a good doctor to guide you in the gut.

Dr. Jill 29:47

I did find your article on maskne, and I posted it. So that's up already. If you want to say anything about that, [you can], and then I want to talk about your products in the last 10 minutes here.

Dr. Trevor Cates 29:57

Yes, absolutely. No, I mean, I think that the blog has some tips. There are just some simple things that you can think about and use if you have to wear a mask, especially for prolonged periods of time if you have that requirement and you have to go to school or work and need it but yet you're having skin breakouts. There are some tips, like just being mindful of the type of material that the mask is made out of. And then also, what are you putting on your skin under the mask? And are you

able to take the mask off periodically and actually use a good cleanser that helps clear up your skin, give it a clean slate, and then put the mask back on? Those are some brief tips.

Dr. Jill 30:42

One other thing I'm thinking is pretty simple and I'd love to know your opinion but I'm assuming for women, maybe less makeup is more. If you're going to wear a mask, you probably shouldn't be wearing a lot of makeup underneath it because it's going to clog the pores.

Dr. Trevor Cates 30:53

Right, yes. Absolutely. That's why I'm saying: What are you putting underneath if you don't really need to wear it? I know people are taking it on and off. It may not be as much of an issue for you. But I think as women, a lot of us anyway, like to do our hair and makeup. We like that part. But what I want your goal to be is to not need to wear makeup. If you're looking at addressing the root causes of your skin issues, you won't have anything to hide anymore. You won't have breakouts. You won't have the discolorations in your skin or the imbalances in your skin. You can actually heal that. So if you happen to have to take off your mask and you don't have makeup on, you're not going to be embarrassed about it. That's what my goal is for you. And then, if you want to wear makeup and you want to enhance your natural beauty, you can do that. Make sure you're using clean products, though.

Dr. Jill 31:50

I love it. And I couldn't agree more because I had a lot of issues between cancer, Crohn's, and mold in my 20s and 30s. And I think my skin is clearer now than it ever was before. And what I find is that I'm much more apt to go out on a hike. I don't wear any makeup. I feel confident about my skin now because it's really freeing. And again, nothing against makeup. I love putting on my makeup. But it's fun to be able to go out without it when I, of all people, know how it was to have lots of breakouts—really, really difficult skin. It was almost embarrassing and shameful to go out with how I felt and how bad it looked before. And that was my issue. But I really, really get that. Well, let's talk a little bit about your line. I've used it. I love it. So tell us a little bit about what you have for your products.

Dr. Trevor Cates 32:36

Yes, absolutely. I wanted to create something for my patients, for myself, my

daughters, my family and my friends. What I was finding is that people were telling me, "Well, I want to use natural skincare products because I realize there are all these toxic ingredients in skincare products. But I don't think the natural products work." That's what people kept telling me. I know of the healing powers of nature, so I started to dive into the research and look at what may have been missing from the natural skincare lines out there. That's when I started to learn all this about the skin microbiome, the pH of the skin, the importance of maintaining that pH and then also certain natural actives.

Dr. Trevor Cates 33:20

Just like with our supplements, we want to have the purest, most potent form of these nutrients and herbs in our supplements. We also want that with our skincare products. I noticed that a lot of natural skincare lines were starting to not use the purest form or use enough of the ingredient to actually create results. So that's what led me to create the Spa Doctor skincare line. I wanted to take in all these key aspects of what will make a natural product truly effective because I wanted people to feel like natural can be effective. "Yes, it is!" So I created a four-step skincare system. It's a cleanser, serum, moisturizer and a plant-based oil blend. I wanted to create it in a simple system, all with a pH that supports the skin and with these natural actives. So that's what I created.

Dr. Trevor Cates 34:16

And as you can tell, you're using the products, it's amazing—the results that can happen when you use a really great natural skincare line that supports healthy skin. I knew it was going to be amazing when I launched the company five years ago. But we continue to get these incredible testimonials from people and they use the products for 30 days and the results that they see in their skin are pretty phenomenal. Honestly, before I turned 40, I didn't really think much personally about skincare products. But I think in my early 40s, I really started to think, "Okay, I need to start looking at this personally too." And I'm so glad. I'm 48 now, and I'm so glad that I did because I look back at pictures from my 30s and I feel like my skin is in many ways healthier than it was when I was younger because of using these products and adding them to a healthy routine.

Dr. Jill 35:14

Oh, I could not agree more with you. And the same thing. Right around 40, I was

like, "Ooh." We didn't talk about the sun, but I was a sun worshipper for most of my life. And when I hit 40, I was like, "Oh, I've got to really protect my skin." I wish I would have [done that] more before. But again, a lot of times, because of changing the reactive oxygen and really getting our skin nutrients, we can reverse some of that damage. But talk about the sun really briefly because that's a big one, isn't it?

Dr. Trevor Cates [35:41](#)

Yes, it is. When they talk about oxidative damage, one of the root causes we think about [is] skin. A lot of times, sun exposure can accelerate oxidative damage. But it's tricky. We also love the sun because it helps with our vitamin D levels and we enjoy getting outdoors because of the health benefits of being in nature and being outdoors. And you and I both live in beautiful places where the outdoors is a huge part of our lifestyle. So I think it's important to be smart about the sun.

Dr. Trevor Cates [36:18](#)

Don't be afraid of the sun. I want you to be able to get out and enjoy it. But especially when we're looking at going into the spring and summer months when the sun is stronger—we're outdoors more and we have more exposed skin—[we should be] thinking about trying to avoid the middle of the day when the sun is harshest, trying to go earlier and then later in the day. And certainly, when you go out in the sun, the biggest thing first is to think about hats, cover-ups, and then also sunscreen. But use shade to your advantage. Don't forget about that as well. Hats are really key and certain cover-ups as well.

Dr. Trevor Cates [37:05](#)

But when it comes to your face, using a sunscreen that is more of a mineral sunscreen than a chemical sunscreen, I believe, is a healthier way to go for your skin and your overall health. The problem with chemical sunscreens is that they contain ingredients like oxybenzone. Oxybenzone is a known endocrine-disrupting chemical and hormone-disrupting chemical, which is one of the big concerns in a lot of skincare products. This class of chemicals—I'm sure you've talked about this—has been linked to a lot of hormonal imbalances and health issues that result from exposure to them. So we want to reduce our exposure.

Dr. Trevor Cates [37:46](#)

Plus, it's not good for the environment. Some of these ingredients have been banned in places like Hawaii because of their impact on coral reefs and things like that. So using more of the zinc oxide-based sunscreens is a way better way to go. Also, another great thing about them is that you get instant protection with zinc oxide. When you're using a chemical sunscreen, you have to wait for that chemical reaction to happen in your skin. So if you really start to think about it, it's like, "What exactly is happening on my skin?" But using more mineral-[based sunscreens] creates more of a barrier function so immediately they have that protection, which is also a great thing for kids because telling kids to wait 15 minutes is not easy.

Dr. Jill 38:31

It's not going to happen. Thanks for clarifying. I love sunshine. It's so important for vitamin D. So a little sunshine—we do still need this. But I used to be hours in the sun with baby oil back in the day. I can't even imagine. I was not planning on [this]—before we end and then I'll give you a chance to kind of leave some last tidbits—[but] I'm going to share a little picture with you guys of me from, I think, six years ago and then a year ago and how different my skin is already. This is going to blow your mind. I'm going to be really vulnerable here and just share. This is totally spur-of-the-moment. Can you see that picture? On the left is six years ago, in the midst of mold. You can see the lines and the different stuff there. You can see my eyes. And the one on the right is [from] a year ago. I feel like I'm even more shiny than I was a year ago. But I think you can see here what it does to take the initiative to change your skincare regimen.

Dr. Jill 39:26

I'm going to share links to your products, Dr. Cates, because I love them. And we've also developed a brand new NAD cream that I want to share because I feel like that's been a game changer on top of the other regimen that we're recommending. So this is just to show you, like, this is real life. This is spur-of-the-moment. This is me six years ago and a year ago. Can you tell the difference there? I'm almost embarrassed to show it. But if it helps people understand, it really does make a difference.

Dr. Jill 39:51

That was when I started to say—I think I was probably 39 and now I'm 44—I think one of the things I was like: "Gosh, I'm looking older than my age." And now I think I've actually reversed that to where I look at at least my age, maybe a little bit younger. And you clearly do, Dr. Cates. You look amazing. You glow. You're a perfect poster for your own skincare line. So I wanted to be sure and share that to give you guys encouragement that I live this; Dr. Cates has lived this. This is stuff that I'm practicing every day. I'm trying to find good products. I'm trying to do what I tell my patients to do because I have the same issues that you do and I've had all kinds of skin issues that I've overcome. But it's possible. It's possible, and that's what's exciting.

Dr. Jill [39:26](#)

Well, any last final words to leave us with encouragement? And like I said, I'll be sure to link to your products on here and everywhere else that you find this video.

Dr. Trevor Cates [40:43](#)

I want to leave your audience with a tip and that is to grab a garbage bag and go into your bathroom. Take some time to do this. When you do your spring cleaning, it's a great time to do it. Go and look at your personal care products. Start looking at the labels. And here's another thing: If it's been sitting there for a while and you don't know how long you've had it, just throw it away. These products do have a shelf life. They do expire. At The Spa Doctor Products, we have a two-year shelf life for our products. It's a little unique in the natural skincare world but we have a nice natural preservative system that we use. But especially with natural products, you want to be mindful of that.

Dr. Trevor Cates [41:28](#)

Don't stick your fingers in the products; you're contaminating your products. Mold can grow very easily in open containers. That's why most of our products come in pumps. Or even with one, we have a mask that has a lid that opens. Use the little spatula that comes with these so that you're not contaminating. Put the lids back on. And then get that garbage bag; throw away any products that you don't know how long they've been sitting there. They're expired. Also, start learning about toxins and skincare and trying to start making that shift. Spring is a great time to do that.

Dr. Jill 42:01

Awesome. Thank you so much for your time and your expertise. It's just been great to reconnect and hear all the good stuff happening. And hopefully, we'll have a few more good ski days before the season ends.

Dr. Trevor Cates 42:14

Absolutely. Thank you for having me on, Dr. Jill!

Dr. Jill 42:18

You're welcome. Thanks so much!