

**Clara Cohen:** In the mirror in the morning, what do you see when you look at your face? I'm going to be 60 soon, and I look at my face. I'm like, oh, at the wrinkles coming. That's normal. I get it. I'm still vital. I feel good. I feel happy. But we have tools in our toolbox that I love as.

Acupuncturist, we have the opportunity to use cosmetic acupuncture. My guest today, Stefanie Makagon, is someone that is going to talk about skincare specifically. She's gonna really teach us the differences between cosmetic acupuncture and microneedling, for example. Do you know the difference?

I did not actually understand what happened during those two different ways of helping patients when it comes to skincare. Then she's gonna talk about LED light. She's gonna talk about all the little things she does with her patients, including skincare. What are the three? Skin, product you need on your skin.

Nothing else. So we're gonna talk about all this. Are you ready? This is Skin Day. Let's go.

Welcome to AcuPro, A show dedicated to making Chinese medicine and acupuncture. Easy to grasp and fun to learn. Hi, I am your host, Clara Cohen. I support practitioners and students like you in changing the world one patient at a time. My goal is to share my passion for TCM and empower you to achieve superior patient care.

I love to showcase the amazing benefits of acupuncture because after all, acupuncture rocks.

We've got the Canadians in the house today on the AcuPro Show. I have Stefanie Makagon coming from Ontario, Toronto area, and I'm on the West coast in Vancouver, so I'm so glad Stefanie is coming today to speak about what she's passionate about, which is all about skin. Which I have to say is probably my weakest area in TCM. So I'm so glad she's here. So welcome to the Acupro shows, Stefanie.

**Stefanie Makagon:** Thank you, Clara. I'm so happy to be here. I was telling you earlier, you got me through acupuncture school, all your diagrams, your resources, everything. So it is so nice to actually meet you and be on your show. It's so exciting.

**Clara Cohen:** Thank you for saying that. I'm so glad I was there along your journey.

But now you've been practicing for quite a long time. We are now in 2026. So you graduated over eight years ago. Is that right?

**Stefanie Makagon:** it was 2020. 6 years ago. Yeah.

**Clara Cohen:** Okay, 'cause you said you graduated during, the whole pandemic. So that was interesting. I'm sure that makes it a little bit tougher for a lot of students to graduate at that time. But today we are here to talk about skincare because that's something you're passionate about.

have a bunch of questions for you specifically because you do a lot of cosmetic as well, but why? Did you get into skin? Why was it a passion? How did that become, because we all go into practice and we all have something that maybe we start general practitioners and then eventually, for me, I really focused a lot on women's health and this was my path and fertility and pregnancy and menopause and all this, and that was really something I was passionate about.

And then I went and did more training into all those areas to really be able to help and support my patients. For you, why skin?

**Stefanie Makagon:** It's such a great question. Like many people, this is almost a third career for me, and we see that so much in our profession. And before even acupuncture was a thought, I had never been very consistent with my topical skincare. I grew up in the age of like apricots, scrubs and laying out in the sun and like skincare just wasn't really a priority.

But as I got older and into my thirties, I did start to notice. Some changes in my skin and sometimes we start to panic a little bit as we go from our twenties to our thirties and we see those changes. So I sought out this clinic in Vancouver, actually it still exists, a thriving clinic, called SKN Holistic Skin Clinic.

**Clara Cohen:** I know the owner of that clinic.

**Stefanie Makagon:** Amanda?

**Clara Cohen:** Yes. Yes, I do.

**Stefanie Makagon:** Yes. I walked into that clinic. I went in for a consultation. I had no idea about anything that they offered. But she had done this exquisite job of blending traditional Chinese medicine, things like cosmetic acupuncture and cupping, and even manual microneedling with really modern technologies like lasers, BBLs skin tightening.

And she recommended this whole package of things for me, and one of them was cosmetic acupuncture. So even though I'd heard of acupuncture and it had actually had a big role in my family, my mom's health, I'd never heard of cosmetic acupuncture. And it was even years after that until I really heard about it again.

But it stuck in my head and really impacted me because it was when. Botox was really becoming big, and filler was becoming big. And those things, quite frankly, really scared me. But I wanted to do something that was good for my skin. So as I was coming into the idea of doing acupuncture, skin just kept coming up. It just seemed like such a beautiful thing to offer women who want to care for their skin and want to look their best but maybe don't wanna go for some of these other more invasive procedures.

And then at the same time, we get to treat their health. Everything is systemic. And the more I learned about acupuncture and how it worked, I was just so sold on the idea. What's interesting is that topical skincare came much later. Like I honestly did not think topical skincare mattered even when I started my practice.

So that was an evolution. But, cosmetic acupuncture, it makes women so happy and empowered to have something that is at their disposal. 'Cause they wanna look good, they wanna feel good, but maybe they just don't want to go that route of more invasive things.

**Clara Cohen:** And that's totally true, and for people that are listening, if you're watching this on YouTube, Stefanie's skin is beautiful. Like I'm watching her right now and she looks fantastic. So she's a great model for what she does, first of all.

**Stefanie Makagon:** Thank you. The ring light helps. The ring light helps.

**Clara Cohen:** I got the light from the window. It's beautiful outside, but I feel really pale.

I'm gonna be in my sixties, so I've had cosmetic acupuncture in my clinic. My friend Rebecca Stephens has done cosmetic acupuncture on me.

And we've seen the effect. I love cosmetic acupuncture because it brings more collagens to the area and it's such, like you said, non-invasive. I had a patient that came to see me years ago who was in her forties and decided to have Botox specifically in the frown, line in between the eyebrows area.

When she came to see me, she had nerve pain on her face for seven years from them damaging a nerve in her face. So she has been since then, having like a permanent headache and she's in so much pain she had to stop working. Like it was so damaging.

And so if we can offer something that is not going to have that. Not saying that it happens all the time, I understand that, but it is more possible than with acupuncture. I know you did extensive training in a lot of area when it comes to skin.

I wanted to start by asking you to explain for people or practitioners or even students who don't know the difference between microneedling. Cosmetic acupuncture. Do you use guasha? Do you use LED? Do you use buccal massage, which is obviously oral, I assume. I just wanted to make sure I got that right.

And then do you always recommend, like you said, skin product for the external part? And then we'll talk about the internal part. 'cause I wanna talk about how the skin reflects the internal, but first I want you to share the difference in between what you're doing and what does that mean really when we explain to patients what's the difference?

**Stefanie Makagon:** That's a great question. I always recommend people start with an initial cosmetic acupuncture appointment. So before we add on buccal or gua sha or microneedling or any of these other things, or even skincare, come in for the initial. Because that's gonna give us time to do a full consultation.

And also when I needle your body and I needle your skin, I learn a lot about your skin. 'cause we've got our hands in there. We're feeling, you know, are there tight muscles? What is the condition of the skin? Is the skin barrier intact? What does this person's skin really need? And. Usually if people are going to do a series of treatments, so like six to 10, they're coming in twice a week or once a week, I always say just do the basic cosmetic acupuncture.

You're most likely going to get the best results from that, and it's the most economical, to go. I add the LED light to all of my treatments, so I don't have an additional charge for that. That's just a personal choice. I think it is such a benefit to the treatment that I just include that, and it's really nice for patients to experience that.

**Clara Cohen:** What does the LED contribute to when it comes to treatment, except for the relaxation and the warms to it?

**Stefanie Makagon:** The one that I have is the Celluma. So it has three settings for cosmetic. I'll usually use either blue or red light. The blue setting is for acne, so it actually helps to kill the acne bacteria on the skin and lower inflammation. So that can really speed up your work when you're working on somebody with acne and they can kind of.

Right away in a couple days see a difference. So that helps people buy into what you're doing and come a little more often so that they can really see the true benefits. 'cause as you know it, it's cumulative. And then the red light that is really for, I hate the word anti-aging, but for pro aging, for, aging well to help the skin look and function, in an optimal way.

So. The red light gets into the mitochondria of the cells and basically gives them power, gives them some energy to work really hard. So if the cosmetic acupuncture is recruiting the cells up to the face to build collagen, then the LED light is super powering them to do their job really well.

**Clara Cohen:** Great explanation. Thank you.

**Ad:** Since I started AcuPro Academy, many people have asked me to offer a cosmetic acupuncture online course. However, I do not practice it, but I found the perfect person for that. My friend and colleague, Dr. Rebecca Stephens, has created a course that is easy to digest, very practical, and provides a wealth of knowledge.

You can diversify your practice and increase your earnings while delighting your patients by adding cosmetic acupuncture, or sometimes call facial rejuvenation to your repertoire. This course contains everything you need to start practicing facial acupuncture. Immediately upon completion, listen to what people who invested in this course had to say.

I was excited to take this course in order to add facial acupuncture to my services and was blown away by Dr. Rebecca's knowledge. She is calm and explain everything so well. She obviously has a lot of experience in the area, and I can't wait to start utilizing this new skill on my patients. I would highly recommend this course.

Here's another one. This is a great course. Everything was well explained, but without being repetitive, the video demonstration was so well paced, clear and complete. It definitely made me feel more confident to practice cosmetic acupuncture. Thank you, Dr. Stevens. If you ever wanted to offer cosmetic acupuncture

As an alternative to Botox and other chemicals, this is the course for you. Go to [acupro.academy.com](http://acupro.academy.com) and click the TCM course on the menu tab or check out the link in the show note below.

**Stefanie Makagon:** Thanks. So the Gua Sha I find, for me personally, unless I am doing a long extended guasha treatment, most of the benefits are gonna come from the acupuncture. I usually do the Gua as an add-on at the beginning of the treatment. I feel like it helps with relaxation. It helps me get to know the skin and where this person is holding tension.

It gives the patient some time to relax before the needles go in, and I believe it helps them to integrate the treatment a little bit better. I feel like it moves fluid, it helps with blood flow. It does a lot of the same things that the acupuncture does. They work really, really nicely together.

The buccal massage. massage . So usually that starts with actually a full external massage from about, the decollete all the way up into the scalp. And then we do the intraoral part. So this is phenomenal for people who have tension in their jaw which. As we're starting to learn more and more, has a very deep connection with the pelvic floor and the hips.

So incredibly helpful for women's health and hormones, even though they don't necessarily know that that's happening when we're working on them. Also helps to move fluid in any kind of stuck muscles. Adhesions, work those things out because over time when things are stuck, they're gonna start to cause.

Asymmetry and more blood flow on one side than the other. More Qi movement on one side, one side or the other. So these are really incredible add-ons that people can add on if they have specific concerns or they just like that extra kind of deluxe spa treatment that they can add onto the cosmetic acupuncture.

**Clara Cohen:** Yeah, that was one of the thing that. I was very surprised the first time I had cosmetic acupuncture is that I felt so relaxed after I didn't think of that 'cause I was like, okay, we're doing my cosmetic, my face and I'm not here for relaxing. But I had no idea how much tension was in my face.

This just surprised me very much. And that was years ago. That was a long time ago, but I, that was a really surprise. And then I absolutely love that you talked about the connection between the pelvic area or the hips area. That whole girdle, we'll call it. And the jaw because it's exactly, I tell patients that all the

time because I do a lot of women's health and you see a lot of women and same idea.

So for me, every time there is issues with the pelvic area being endometriosis, PCOS anything happening. In that area, there is issue of the jaw, and we see that a lot in patients and a lot of time the masser will be really tight, really tense. So it's great that you're doing a massage and you're really relaxing that area because it connects to the hip.

So it in a way. The stomach meridian, which goes through the jaw, is gonna go through the pelvic area and it's related to the spleen, which also goes through the pelvic area. And the spleen and stomach are connected to the pelvic area altogether. So I love that you share that. So thank you for sharing that.

'cause that's one of my. Favorite thing to share with patients that come for issues that are, affecting their pelvic area is like every time I'm like let's check your mass, or let's check your jaw. And they're like, oh, that's so tight. I'm like, yep. And then we could see often on their tongue there's teeth mark the clenching.

All this is so related is fantastic. So thank you for sharing this.

**Stefanie Makagon:** This is a little bit of a departure from cosmetic, but back to the jaw. I did a buccal treatment on an Olympic bobsledder and she just came in for the aesthetic benefits of the treatment. And when she came back next time, she said I had my fastest sprint ever in practice yesterday. And I said, what?

What? Why do you think that is? And she said, my coach said it's probably from the buccal massage because when we relaxed the jaw and it relaxed her hips, it allowed more mobility and more stretch and allowed her to run faster. And that just completely blew my mind when she told me that.

**Clara Cohen:** That's a great analogy and story and plus, when you relax your mouth. I think the neck gets relaxed. Everything, your back, right? Because your scalenes are all tight and tense and you SCM, so I could see that being so useful and then all the way down to the hip. When people say, oh, we need more study.

I'm like, when you have patients coming and telling you this. This is something you could share and say, Hey, this is what happened. That was not the intention, but this is what happened. So you know, although your intention of your treatment is so crucial to the outcome, the body is also gonna respond and know what to do, and it'll be a surprise for a lot of people.

So thank you for sharing. That's awesome.

**Stefanie Makagon:** I love how you mentioned the relaxation because with new patients it can be a lot. Your body is full of needles. Your face is full of needles, and then I'm putting this incredibly bright light over your face and I'll come back and people will say, I fell asleep. I'm like, I know you've a body full of needles and a strobe light in your face, but you still had the best nap of your life.

And that happens all the time.

**Clara Cohen:** I think it's a meditative state for me when, I feel I go in with acupuncture being cosmetic or body acupuncture when I get in that state is I'm half knowing that I'm deep, but I know where I am and I know my environment. It's like a very theta wave kind of thing, which means it's like a meditative state.

I feel like my body is sinking into the treatment table. However, it feels like it's floating above and it's really hard to describe because it's opposite, right? You're sinking and you're floating. So I feel light, but I feel heavy at the same time. That is the best outcome. Every time I get acupuncture for treatment for me, because I just feel relaxed without feeling oh, I'm groggy or tired and I can't get up.

It's I feel relaxed, but you take the needles out and now my energy is back. So this to me is beautiful.

Okay, so we talked about gua sha, we talk about LED and I go bu-cul, but you say buccal . for people that are listening, it's B-U-C-C-A-L. It comes from Latin and it means mouth, right?

In French, I would say, buucal, but, we know what we're talking about.

**Stefanie Makagon:** That's such a good description. Yes.

**Clara Cohen:** I know for people that are first time listening to the podcast, welcome to a French person teaching Chinese medicine in English. It's all perfect. What's the difference?

Because you see those terms a lot on website of people that do skincare between microneedling and cosmetic acupuncture. Is it the same? Is it not the same? Can you explain? So if I have students right now that are listening, they might not know the difference because of course we don't learn this in school at all.

This is extra training that people can do later on.

**Stefanie Makagon:** So cosmetic acupuncture, we are using acupuncture needles in the face. Microneedling, we are using a mechanical device that probably has maybe six to 12, I've seen up to 14 needles in a head, and it is going all over the face and making up to a million punctures in the face. And what's interesting about microneedling, at least in Canada, and this is general, there might be provinces that are different, but anyone can do microneedling.

Even though it's kneeling below the dermis, estheticians, doctors, tattoo artists, anyone hairstylists can do microneedling. Not everyone can do acupuncture in Canada. However, the microneedling devices themselves in Canada are regulated. So they're regulated by Health Canada. So, the burden of being certified is on the device, not the practitioner. So the devices are very expensive, but anyone can do it. In many states, you actually have to be licensed to do microneedling, but the devices are not regulated.

**Clara Cohen:** Fascinating.

**Stefanie Makagon:** Yeah, so that's a really interesting distinction and very important I think, for the client to understand, like if you're in the States, you wanna tell your patients that you are using a high end device because they're not all the same. In Canada, you really want to explain that you are a registered healthcare professional, certified in clean needle technique. The device itself is going to be regulated by Health Canada, so that's a very important distinction first of all. So educating the patient in these nuances can help them feel confident in you as a practitioner.

Now when it comes to what are we actually doing? Like why would someone pick one or the other? There are a lot of practitioners, including myself, who speak to patients in terms of. Microneedling being almost motorized cosmetic acupuncture in a way that for hundreds of years in Chinese medicine, they were doing beautifying treatments with needles, plumb blossom, seven star needles on the face to help with skin, and it has now been motorized into a more high tech device.

So I like to make this distinction when we are doing cosmetic acupuncture. We are doing a few more things than we are with microneedling. So there's the body acupuncture, which you can do with microneedling, but your microneedling treatments are gonna be spaced out at least six weeks apart, so you're not necessarily getting acupuncture as often in the body. With the facial acupuncture we might be doing needles to help relax muscles. So if things are

really tense in this area or in the jaw, we're going a little deeper into motor points, into muscles helping to relax those muscles and smooth things out.

We may also be using actual acupuncture points in the meridians to induce changes in those ways, and then we might just be needling into the dermis itself just to induce that collagen, that healing response so that we're getting more of that pro aging and skin health response. So there's a lot of different things going on when we're doing cosmetic acupuncture, it's very handcrafted.

I'm going deeper into your forehead. I'm going lighter into your cheeks. I am maybe helping, the muscles in your neck relax so things aren't being pulled down as much. There's so much going on. We're doing really three things in the face, relaxing muscles, using acupuncture points, and inducing collagen. When we're doing microneedling,

we're doing one thing. It might have multiple results, but it's one thing we're needling the surface of the face. A very good practitioner will know what depth to use in what areas of the face. But we're not going into the muscle. We're not relaxing muscles, we're not using acupuncture points. We are doing a full kind of surface, shallow needling.

The main purpose here is to induce collagen. We can also address acne scarring, some hyperpigmentation because as the cells come up to the skin and reorganize it does tend to help those skin, those cells that are causing pigment to reorganize and not sort of freak out and cause extra pigment in the skin, but it's a surface treatment.

So if someone is really interested in just addressing their fine lines, doing their entire face and potentially neck, I would say go for the microneedling. If someone wants more of a comprehensive work done on their face and something that they're going to commit to doing a little bit more often, then the cosmetic acupuncture is a better choice.

And there's always the option of combining the two, which I love to do. I love to have my patients come in for cosmetic acupuncture. First, let's get your skin functioning as best as we can, and let's start to relax those muscles. Let's get your body. You know, as balanced as we can. Let's optimize everything.

Then let's start talking about microneedling because it's going to work best when your body is able to heal best. 'cause it all has to do with the healing cascade. So then we can start to incorporate the microneedling and then you can

do your maintenance with the cosmetic acupuncture moving forward. So it's really nice to be able to combine those two modalities as well.

**Clara Cohen:** you could see you've done a lot of training 'cause you had to train and invest in all those training for both, acupuncture and microneedling and everything that you've shared today. So I appreciate you sharing that. 'cause I think a lot of people are confused and they're not really sure specifically, if you haven't yet taken any training and you are interested in the training, which one do you start with?

What, where do you go? So having the information is great because you could do both or you could just be going towards one that you feel is more, calling to you like. We always have to follow what feels right in our heart. So I appreciate you sharing this.

And so we talked about all the surface things.

Now I wanna talk about how the skin is the biggest organ on the body and it's the one that reflects what's happening inside. So my question is, do you speak to your patient about what they can do in order to help your treatment in order for the skin to respond to your treatment? Because obviously. The skin is affected by the environment, by, our lifestyle, what we eat, et cetera, et cetera.

So can you share what's your education piece for the patient? And I know each patient's gonna have a different I guess picture depending on what their lifestyle is, how they are, if the smokers and all those kind of things. But what is your basis? What do you recommend? That's the basic thing to do for them.

Maybe it's to take supplements or anything. I would love to hear that.

**Stefanie Makagon:** Great question. So not to take away from facial acupuncture or cosmetic acupuncture, 'cause it's 90% of my practice, but 90% of my treatment is traditional acupuncture. So I am doing an intake, an assessment, a traditional Chinese medicine diagnosis, and I am treating the body first always.

That is. I honestly think 80 to 90% of the entire treatment. And then I'm going to give the the patient lifestyle advice based on their TCM diagnosis like I would with any other patient. So if their skin is very dry with some redness here, and I'm seeing yin deficiency, they're getting a yin deficiency protocol.

If they have lots of inflamed pussy acne. They're getting a damp heat diagnosis. They're getting a damp heat protocol for at home. So not too much changes there. And I always like to tell people that when they ask me students or other practitioners about cosmetic acupuncture, I'm like, you know so much more than you think even before you've taken a cosmetic acupuncture course.

Go back to TCM and go back to what you've learned about diagnosis, and that's gonna be most of it. So then when it comes to the skin and we're doing a cosmetic acupuncture. And now the patient wants to know what to do after. So you've given them your TCM advice. And how I got into skincare was patients asking me. So many patients asking me what do I put on my skin?

What do I do? And I was kind of like. I don't know. I'm an acupuncturist and so there was enough interest and enough questions to make me start to look into it. But what I found was I was looking at the same sources. They were influencers, dermatologists on Instagram, Google, skincare companies that wrote blogs.

That's really where I was going for most of my information. And I realized if I wanted to be a real resource to patients, I needed to know more and do better and feel confident, and it helps that relationship if you're doing cosmetic acupuncture, to be able to speak to the topicals. We're really good at talking about internal, foods, lifestyles. I don't do herbs, but I will refer patients out to TCMs who can prescribe herbs or to a naturopath if I think that would help them with the supplements. But skincare, I started to go to formulators and skincare scientists and do deep research and.

Now I am able to give people good advice, but it's really not complicated. Instead of learning more, it was almost like I learned less so. With someone's skin, we are always focused on the skin barrier first. That is the top of the epidermis. It is like a brick wall. So the bricks are the skin cells and the mortar are the lipids holding everything together, and when that's functioning well.

Your skin is gonna hold onto hydration. It's gonna fight bacteria and disease coming in. It's going to deal with treatments well, it is going to deal with inflammation well and it's going to age well. When this starts to get broken, that's when things start to go wrong. So I always start with the skin barrier and that's what we start to treat before anything else.

We gotta start there because nothing else will work. If we don't start with the barrier, and this always shocks people. I have 15 products in my skincare line. You only need three. The other ones are nice to have cleansing, moisturizing,

sunscreen. That's it. And if you can help your patients just nail those three things and heal their barrier.

Everything else after that is gravy. The skin, just like our bodies, wants to heal. So when we put it in the right balance, it will kind of do its own thing. There's exceptions, rules are made to be broken, but in general, so I look at whether or not someone has dry or oily or sensitive skin. If it's dry, that means they're lacking oil.

If it's oily. They have too much oil, and if it's sensitive, it's reactive. So we look for cleansers and moisturizers and sunscreens that speak to that. Now, is the skin dehydrated and sensitized? That's more water, not oil. So dehydrated skin is gonna be lacking water either internally. Or from the environment.

And if it's sensitized, it means you've put too many products on your skin and it is angry at you, so that skin that needs more water and needs some healing, and you take those concepts and you recommend the right cleansers, moisturizers, and sunscreens. And again, you are 90% there. Everything else is just going to be a great add-on. And so once , we finish with that. I'll say to the patient, so what's your main concern? And we deal with one thing at a time. If their acne still persists, we deal with acne, it's hyperpigmentation, we deal with that redness or rosacea or well aging. And if you tackle one thing at a time, you'll be putting less things on the skin.

The skin will stay happier and you can pinpointed deal with that one thing. And that's the philosophy that I bring to my patients and that I recommend for other practitioners who are working with the skin. It's simplifying things for patients, not being an expert and knowing 75 different ingredients that they could use.

**Ad:** Before we continue with today's episode, I wanna share something that honestly feels like a big moment for me if you've been following me for a while. You know, I've always said no to all sponsorships. I've been approached many times, but I turn them all down because if I don't genuinely use a product or love it, I will never recommend it to you.

But today is different. I am super excited to introduce my very first sponsor. Drum roll please. Jane app. I'm also a Jane Ambassador, so this is a company I actually use and love. I am saying yes because I've used Jane for years in my own multidisciplinary clinic. Truly, it's the best practice management software and electronic medical record.

I've ever worked with before, Jane, we were using a clunky system that made everything harder than it needed to be. When we switched the entire clinic, felt the difference immediately. Jane is built by people who actually understand what it's like to be a practitioner. Running a busy practice. One of my favorite features is online booking.

There is nothing better than waking up and seeing patients booking their own appointment. Well, I was asleep. Your patients can book when it works for them and the wait list feature. Fills last minute cancellations automatically. I love that. I used to spend so much time calling eight to 10 people just to fill up one spot.

Jane also automates the things we never enjoy doing, like intake forms, reminders, confirmation. It honestly feels like having an extra assistant handling all the moving parts. You can focus on what really matters, which is supporting your patients and being the TCM rockstar practitioner. You truly are.

There are so many features I could talk about, but we would be here all day if you are looking for a system that brings more ease, more clarity and comment to your practice. I truly. Recommend Jane. You can check it out at [jane.app/demo](http://jane.app/demo). And because you're part of the Acupro community, you can use my code ACUPRO1MO one month when you sign up to get a one month grace period on your new account.

The link and the code are also in the show notes below for you. Now let's get back to today's episode.

**Clara Cohen:** Less is more to me. That's the same in treatment. It's the same for everything. Less is more. So I appreciate you saying only three products. I am not a skin person, as in I don't use a lot of product on my skin, ever. I've never done that, obviously. I'm gonna use a couple of things. Let's say if it's super sunny and I'm outside hiking for eight hours, I'm gonna put some good sunscreen on because obviously I'm aging.

I get it. What's interesting is I have a lot of patients that are putting a lot of foundation. Every day when they go to the office, they have makeup and everything. They look very nice, but the skin is got, foundation is thick.

You could see it. You could actually see the foundation being quite thick. And to me it's your skin is not breathing. It's not able to breathe oxygen. So how is that helping the health of your skin? In my opinion, it doesn't, but I would love your opinion.

**Stefanie Makagon:** Yeah, that's a good one. My instinct tells me that if someone is wearing a lot of foundation like that, they're not happy with their skin. There's something that they are trying to. Mask or cover up and there is either something that we can address or it's just how they feel about their skin.

I do agree that putting, a lot of product like that on the skin, you're absolutely right. You're very much at risk of clogging pores, not letting the skin turn over well, and really just interrupting the entire process. The skin is a living organ. So yeah, if you're just covering it up, I think that you're going to be doing a disservice.

So if that was my patient, I would try to find out if there's something that they're unhappy with their skin. Is it acne? Is it discoloration? Is it pores? And can we go back to those foundations and see if we can get their skin, just functioning in a healthy way. Because when it's functioning healthy, it looks great.

But then there's also the issue of skin isn't there to be aesthetic. It is there to protect us and it is there to serve a function. And yeah, we all want to look great, but poreless perfect skin without wrinkles and without blemishes, that's not real skin. That's not how it's meant to be. And I think we get a little bit lost here in health and beauty where we think they're the same thing or one equals the other.

That's not true. The skin is gonna break out even the most healthy skin we are going to get wrinkles. You can look at people that have all the money in the world and do every treatment, do a closeup. They've got wrinkles. They're coming for all of us. So We have to go back to the basics with someone.

Is there something that they wanna fix with their skin or is this something that, we're not psychologists and we're not therapists, but we do work with people's psyches and their emotions and why are they covering themselves up? What ideal are they trying to to live up to here? And I think we can do work around that with people because yeah, it's an organ and that's, feels almost like an abuse, right? To just be covering up with all of this thick stuff that the skin can't breathe and it can't live on its own. So yeah, I think that's an incredible observation.

**Clara Cohen:** It is just because I don't use a lot of skincare product, which, as I'm getting older, maybe I should start. I wanted to finish with one thing because we see this a lot and because I was affected personally with it. When I moved to Canada from France.

Within two years, I started getting adult acne. Never had acne in my life before. Never even as a teenager, never, not once. And then within two years of moving to Canada, it was really bad, specifically on my chin area so I was like, okay, it's hormonal. I was in my thirties, my period was.

Regular, everything was fine. We had blood tests and we had so many tests and everything came, Nope, everything's good. Everything normal. Doesn't mean it's for sure normal, but everything showed that everything was working and.

It was funny, I was reading an article at one point and that article said that a lot of people from Europe, when they come to North America, being Canada or the States have issue with the gluten here, and that reflects a lot on their health. But it didn't say necessarily that it was skin related. It just says there's a.

You know, Symptoms that come up, but it didn't explain what symptoms, but it talked specifically of people moving and the difference between the wheat and the gluten in North America versus Europe. So I was like, huh, that's interesting. I never thought of that because it started within two years of being in Canada.

So did it take two years for my body to start getting inflamed and showing up the inflammation with cystic acne. They were big and they were painful. So I stopped eating gluten. Within three weeks. Gone. Gone. The whole thing. My skin I have scar from those still, but completely cleared up.

And every time we go to Europe, I have bread, I have all the pasta, I have all the pastries. No problem. If I come here and I have one piece of cake the next morning. It comes out on my chin. So it's interesting because I've had a lot of patients coming from Europe and they have the same issue and I went and researched, there's a lot of, opinion on it is the glyphosate, which is basically what they put on the crops in North America.

But I've tried organic, it didn't change anything. Like people say, oh, try organic. Didn't change anything. So it's interesting. I'm not going to debate why, but what I wanted to ask you is when people come with adult acne? What is your go-to? What do you say? What do you do? We're not talking about teenagers, we're talking about adult acne because my problem took a long time to figure out, 'cause I had those for 10 years before I figured it out.

So although it took two years to come there. It lasted a long time before I figure it out. And thank you for my husband. 'cause he would never say anything when I had like a big zit and we were just dating and I'm like, oh, this is awful. We're starting to date and I have this big, cystic zit. I'm like, this is great.

It looks so good. Never said anything, which was so sweet of him. So maybe that's why I kept him. Anyway, let me know what you think, what you do when there's adult acne.

**Stefanie Makagon:** I can just, like anyone can kind of panic when a patient comes in like, oh my gosh, how do I help this person? What do I do? Where do I start? I always go back to TCM and my diagnosis and that's the starting point for everybody, right? When there's acne that is red and pussy, we're talking about inflammatory acne.

So if it's blackheads and whitehead, that's non-inflammatory acne. So that's coming from oil production that is not being controlled, or just the person's natural skin type. And dead skin cells and they're getting trapped. So we wanna focus on exfoliation and we wanna focus on, cell turnover.

So that's gonna be your exfoliants and something like a retinol or a vitamin A for the outside. But they'll tell you in dermatology that your skin type doesn't really change. And I will say as an acupuncturist. I mean, let's start with your diagnosis. Is there a lot of damp? Is there a lot of stagnation?

What's happening here? Because maybe we don't need to go to those topicals or stay on those topicals if we can regulate things on the inside. So when that oil and that debris starts to. Get infected is one way to say it. Now we're into inflammatory acne. It's red, it's pussy, it can be deep and it's not coming out.

Those can be very, very difficult to treat. I would go so far as to say over the counter topicals are probably not going to do much. Once it's there. You can help prevent more from coming up, but they're very hard to treat 'cause you can't get to them. Now we're going back to internal, like we know this is inflammation.

Like it's inflammatory acne, so it is inflammation. Is there some damp? Probably if there's pus coming out, but just those red painful nodules, that's inflammation. We don't know the cause. In your case, it sounds like it was the gluten. As practitioners that might take us a long time to get there, but we'll treat the inflammation because we know that's the root.

And I will often suggest to patients to take out gluten, take out dairy, and take out sugar. Maybe not permanently, but let's start there to take the inflammatory load off the body. And start to eat some immune building foods or get some immune building supplements to help your body's immune system fight because the dermatological answer is antibiotics.

So they'll give you antibiotics 'cause that will help to kill the bacteria. We might not want to go there right away. So helping our immune system, lowering inflammation and taking out those really inflammatory foods is usually a good place to start. And then you can start to add back. Those inflammatory foods and see if one of them really does give you a huge reaction.

In TCM, the goal is always to not have a hugely restricted diet. We wanna fix the inside so that our body can handle these things once in a while. But if you were born in Europe and your body was never exposed to these things, you just might not ever be able to eat them. Right. So everyone is different, but that is usually how I look at it.

What kind of acne, inflammatory or non, start with the inflammation. Treat it as inflammation. Try to find the root cause of that inflammation, and the topicals can be very helpful. But I, again, I go back to the topicals are the tip of the iceberg, not really the full treatment.

**Clara Cohen:** TCM Rocks, as I've said it.

**Stefanie Makagon:** Exactly.

**Clara Cohen:** Stefanie, that was very educational. I hope that everybody got really great nuggets. Thank you for explaining everything to us and your passion for helping people with their skin, because although it's, our outside look, it's really reflecting what's going on inside. So I love that you really follow your TCM diagnosis and, go from there and build from there.

So thank you for being here. If there's anything you'd like to share before we part with our audience the floor is yours.

**Stefanie Makagon:** I think that we do such a service to our patients when we help to cut out the noise, help them see like what is a trend, what is something that can actually help your skin because patients can get well, not even patients,, all of us can get really roped into trying the next best thing.

And when it comes to skincare, I know so many of us, myself included at certain points that like, we open our drawers and it's like full of skincare that we never use. It doesn't really seem to work. So as practitioners, when we can help our patients spend less money, filter out the noise, go back to basics.

Let's find your right cleanser, moisturizer, sunscreen. Okay. What are the ingredients that are proven to work? Have a large body of science behind them,

proving that this works. Vitamin C, retinol, exfoliants peptides, you're kind of done there. And some acne ingredients. Those are scientifically backed. There are other ingredients that are scientifically promising.

They're fun to watch. If you have the money and wanna try them out, go for it. But don't get sucked into thinking that you need all of these complex, expensive serums and a 12 step routine. It's nice that we're starting to see the industry go away from that after we just spent years of ruining everyone's skin barrier.

So that would be my biggest takeaway. It can feel like you're not offering your patients enough info, but sometimes simplifying it intentionally and explaining how and why is the best advice that we can give to our patients.

**Clara Cohen:** Perfect way to end it. Go back to basics. I love it. It's what I say all the time about Chinese medicine. I'm like, if you can't understand something, go back to foundation. Go back to the basics. That's where the answer will be. So thank you so much, Stefanie, for coming on the show. I really appreciate you sharing your wisdom today.

**Stefanie Makagon:** Yes.

Thank you, Clara. This is such an honor.

**Clara Cohen:** Thank you so much for spending your time with me today. I truly hope you benefited from this episode, and I would love for you to share it with a friend that may benefit from it as well. Follow the show, live a review, and if you want more, go to my website, [acupro.academy.com](http://acupro.academy.com). I have tons of resources there with treatment protocols, case studies, free courses, and so much more.

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