

March 2011

Johnson & Johnson Challenge Introduction

Humans have been using cosmetics including lotions and creams for the skin for thousands of years. Archeologists have found evidence that as much as ten thousand years ago people may have rubbed castor oil or animal fat on their skin to soften it. In ancient Egypt olive and sesame oils were used as a lotion, sometimes with the addition of ingredients such as spices or wine. In 2005, Italian archeologists discovered a small flask of ointment in the tomb of an Etruscan aristocrat. Sealed for over two thousand years by a layer of clay, the preserved lotion was found to contain oils and resins from trees that grow only in Africa, indicating that then as now, the wealthy enjoyed the use of imported cosmetics.

Honey, milk, herbs, seaweed, lanolin, beeswax and plant oils are among the ingredients that have been used in skin lotions and creams. In modern times, thousands of creams have been developed, guided by discoveries in skin biology and chemistry. Although natural ingredients are still used in commercial skin preparations, high-tech chemicals are now added to target special problems such as wrinkles, aging or discolored skin as well as to create products with longer shelf life and consumer appeal.