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What Is the 60-Second Rule — and Does It Actually Work?

Ariel Ostad, a board-certified dermatologist in New York City, says a proper cleanse maintains the skin's natural barrier, even while removing excess dirt and oil. "Your skin's barrier is always working to protect your face from chemicals, ingredients within products, and making sure pollutants don't get in," says Ostad. A light cleanser helps remove dead skin, without disrupting the protections that your body instinctively puts in place.

As with other skin-care suggestions, notice how your skin reacts in the moment. If skin feels tight or stripped after cleansing, that may be a sign that 60 seconds is too long. Ostad often sees "over-cleansing" in his practice, which can lead to dryness and inflammation.

"We live in a culture where we feel we have to wash our face multiple times a day, which, over time, can lead to issues like acne and rosacea from the irritation caused by over-washing," he says. To stave off irritation, Ostad recommends that patients with those issues stick to a 20- or 30-second cleanse.