

THE HEALTH THREAT that's causing women to gain weight, p. 106

SHAPE  
YOUR  
LIFE

BURN  
250  
CALORIES  
IN YOUR  
LIVING  
ROOM

30-MINUTE PLAN

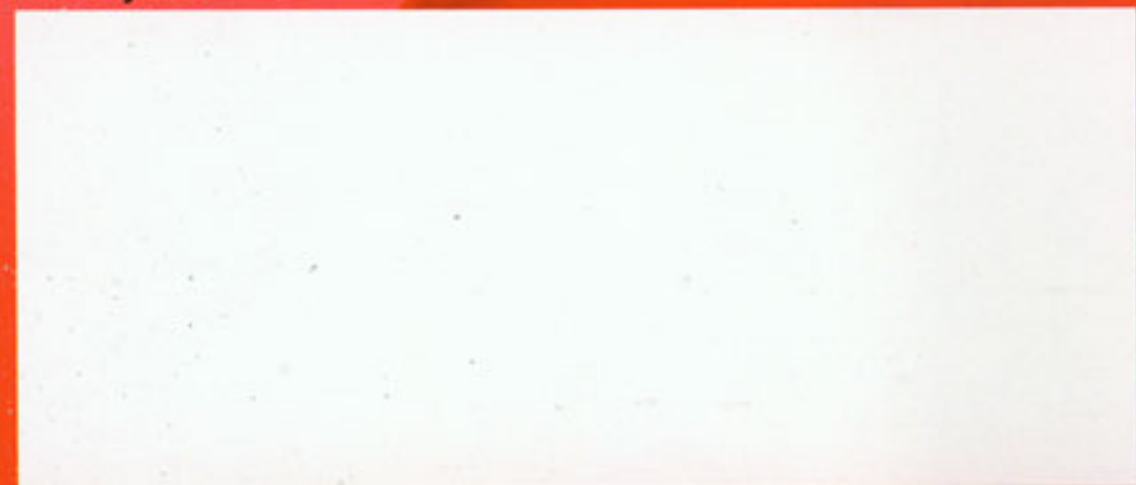
# SHRINK YOUR BELLY BULGE

This step-by-step  
workout will firm  
up your abs,  
butt & thighs

\* Fabulous  
hair in 15  
minutes flat

Real women before & after

February 2008



\$3.99 U.S. \$5.99 Canada  
Shape.com

EXCLUSIVE  
**Carrie  
Underwood**  
"I lost 20  
pounds!"  
Her 3 slim-down  
secrets, inside

RESEARCH PROVEN

# 15

## POWER FOODS

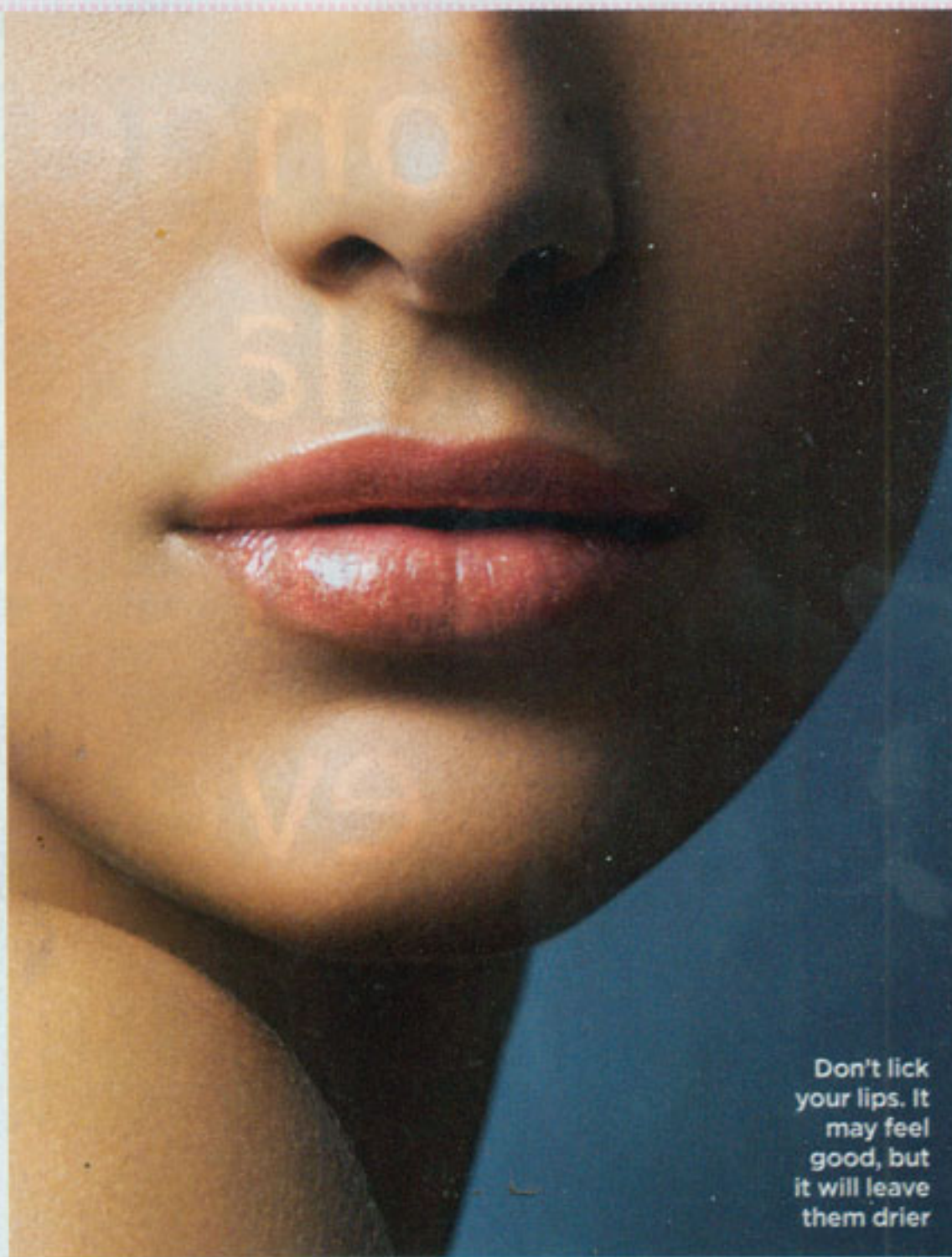
YOU SHOULD  
BE EATING NOW  
(THEY MAY  
EVEN SAVE  
YOUR LIFE)

**PLUS** SPRING STYLES  
to invest in today, p. 210

# a smoother, prettier pout

The best ways to prevent—and heal—chapped lips.

BY GENEVIEVE MONSMA



Don't lick your lips. It may feel good, but it will leave them drier

**D**ry skin anywhere is extremely uncomfortable, but when your mouth is affected, it's even more so, since lip skin is particularly thin and delicate. We asked Jennifer Linder, M.D., a dermatologist in Scottsdale, Arizona, and a clinical instructor at the University of California, San Francisco, for some protection pointers.

## The basic facts

Your lip skin contains substances called **natural moisturizing factors (NMFs)**. These are humectants found in the cells of the **stratum corneum** (the surface of your skin's outermost layer, or

**epidermis**). NMFs are also found in the **lipid layer** (the thin film of oil that coats these cells and seals in their water content). Under normal circumstances, these NMFs work synergistically to keep your mouth soft and hydrated. But certain conditions can disrupt the process and allow moisture to evaporate at an accelerated rate, leaving your lips parched and prone to chapping.

## What to look for

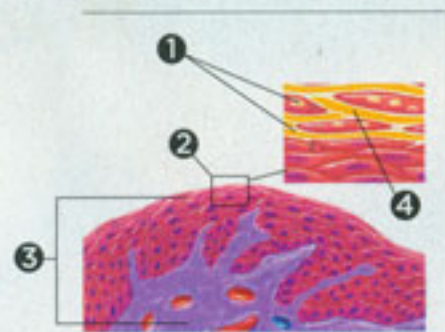
- > **Very dry air** When humidity is lower than 45 percent, the H<sub>2</sub>O in your skin evaporates into the atmosphere faster than it can be replaced by your body.
- > **Sensitivity to products that plump** If your lip plumper

stings upon application, it likely contains an ingredient, like ginger, that deliberately irritates and swells the skin (hence, a fuller-looking lip). This can interfere with the way your NMFs and lipid layer function, causing your lips to dry out.

> **Dryness elsewhere on your body** Parched skin anywhere is often the result of not drinking enough water. Aim to down at least eight 8-ounce glasses a day.

## Simple solutions

- > **Cover up 24/7** Regularly swipe on gloss, balm, or hydrating lipstick. One we love: Kiehl's Lip Balm #1 (\$9; [kiehls.com](http://kiehls.com)) with squalene, a moisturizer derived from olives.
- > **Skip spicy toothpaste** If your lips are chapped, switch to a non-irritating, flavor-free formula.
- > **Slather before you sleep** Use an extra-heavy lip salve pre-bedtime to wake up well-lubed. Try ChapStick Overnight Lip Treatment (\$3; at drugstores) with vitamin E.



## CHAPPED LIPS

1. NMFs
2. stratum corneum
3. epidermis
4. lipid layer



**EXPERT STRATEGY** To keep your mouth in soft, supple shape, a rich balm is important, but so is sunscreen. "Exposure to ultraviolet rays exacerbates chronically dry and shriveled lips," says Jennifer Linder, M.D. To stay shielded, spread your facial sunscreen over your pout too—or use a balm that contains SPF 15 or higher.

> **The bottom line** Handle lips with care; use only tepid water when washing, apply rich lip products, and exfoliate with a soft toothbrush weekly.