Curology®

The Clarity Gap

We surveyed over 1,900 Gen Z skincare consumers in the U.S. and learned that skincare is essential to them—and they're looking for clarity.



Gen Z invests early and heavily in skincare, actively hunting for solutions. Yet, an overload of information, products, and influence has only made skin health more confusing.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The Gen Z Skin Health & Confidence Survey was conducted by Curology in June 2026 to understand the different experiences Gen Z faces while learning about and using skincare. Data was collected online using AYTM, an independent consumer research panel.

1,930
RESPONDENTS

13–29
AGES

62% / 38%
FEMALE / MALE

June 2026
FIELDED

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01



CHAPTER 01

Skincare Is Essential.

Question:

How much of a priority is skincare for Gen Z?

Finding:

For Gen Z, skincare isn’t an indulgence. It starts early, holds its place in the budget and outranks other discretionary spending.

Skincare has moved from discretionary to non-negotiable.

89%

would cut back on another category before cutting skincare.

Source: Curology Gen Z Skin Health & Confidence Survey, June 2026 (n=1,930)

STARTING AGE

For two-thirds of Gen Z, a skincare routine begins in early adolescence.

AGE GEN Z STARTED USING SKINCARE



Source: Curology Gen Z Skin Health & Confidence Survey, June 2026 (base: among those who reported their age first started using skincare; n=1910)

02



CHAPTER 02

More Information. Less Certainty.

Question:

If there is more skincare information available than ever, why are consumers still struggling to find clarity?

Finding:

Gen Z knows exactly who they trust. It isn’t always who they hear from.

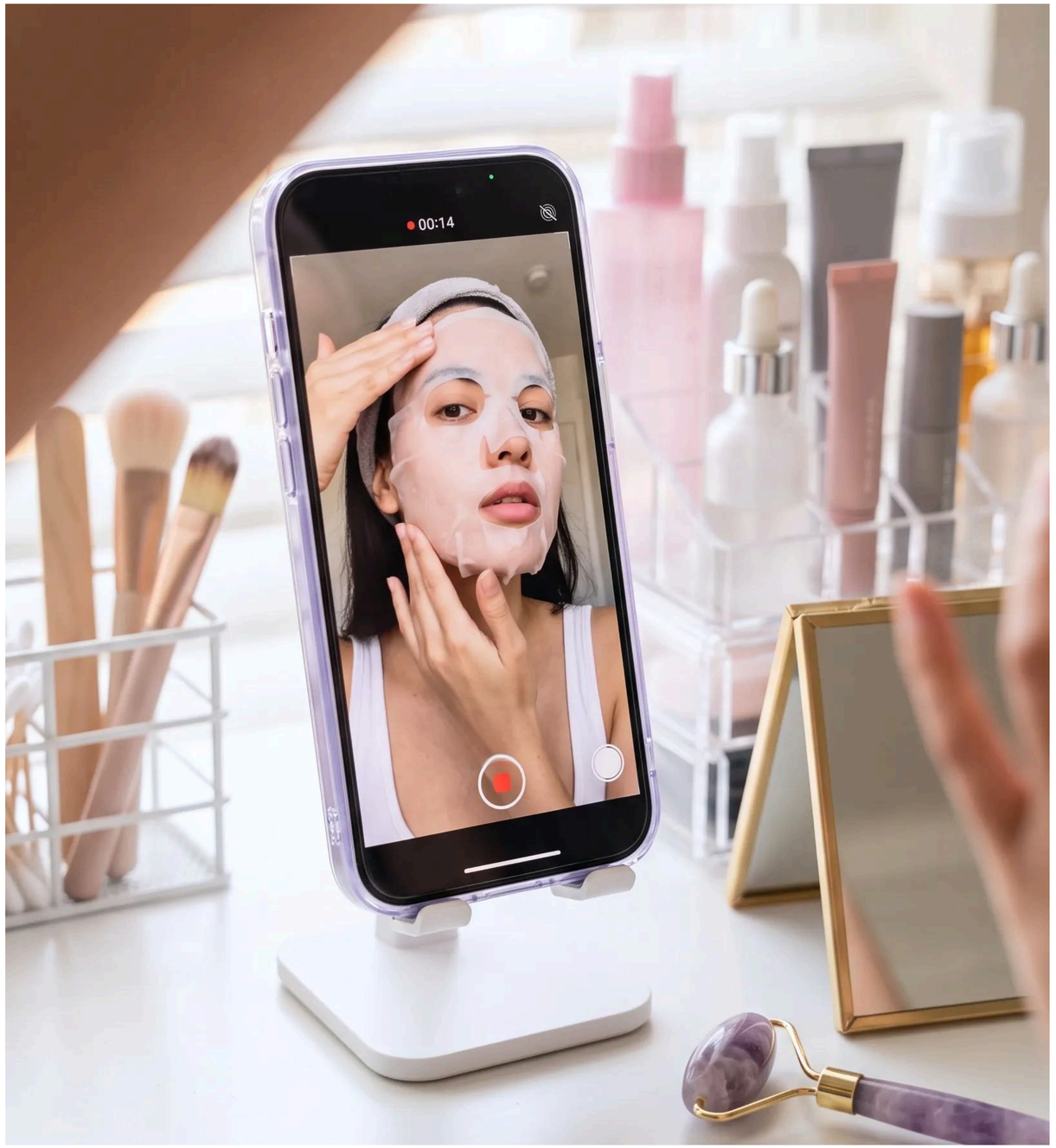
INFORMATION OVERLOAD

More content. More products. Less clarity.

Social remains a primary source of skincare advice and purchase influence—and the results don’t always deliver.

53%

of Gen Z surveyed feel confused about which skincare products are actually right for them



Source: Curology Gen Z Skin Health & Confidence Survey, June 2026 (n=1,930)

Expertise earns their trust. Social earns their attention.

Most trusted skincare source

43%

Dermatologists



9%

Social media



YET

62%

still turn to social media for skincare advice.

65%

have purchased a skincare product because of a social media recommendation in the past 6 months.

Source: Curology Gen Z Skin Health & Confidence Survey, June 2026 (n=1,930)

03



CHAPTER 03

The Pressure to Get It Right—Fast.

Question:

How quickly does Gen Z expect skincare to work?

Finding:

Gen Z expects fast results and feels real pressure to have clear skin. Here, skincare moves from routine to real life.

They want results fast. They don’t trust instant.

88%

expect skincare to show results in 4 weeks or less.

66%

are skeptical of products promising instant results.

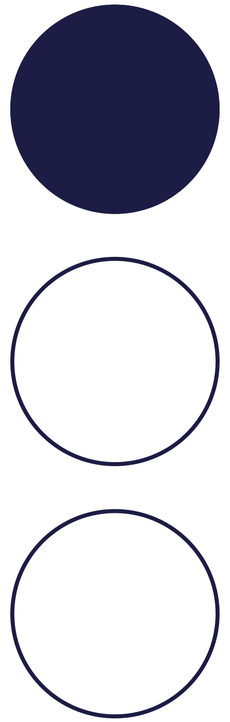


Source: Curology Gen Z Skin Health & Confidence Survey, June 2026 (n=1,930)

REAL-LIFE IMPACT

1 in 3

have canceled, skipped or rescheduled plans because of their skin.



Source: Curology Gen Z Skin Health & Confidence Survey, June 2026 (n=1,930)



SELF-SCRUTINY

78%

have checked their skin in the mirror more than usual because of how they felt about their skin

Source: Curology Gen Z Skin Health & Confidence Survey, June 2026 (n=1,930)

04



CHAPTER 04

Gen Z Wants Expert Help. The Gap Is Access.

Question:

How open is Gen Z to working with a dermatology provider for their skin?

Finding:

Openness to professional care is nearly universal. Getting it isn’t.

Interest is nearly universal. Access isn’t.

Many U.S. regions don't have enough dermatologists, meaning fewer than 4 per 100,000 residents, the estimated density needed to care for a population adequately. An analysis of American Academy of Dermatology membership data found that 72.3% of U.S. postal section codes with at least one practicing dermatologist (515 of 712) fell below this benchmark, and nearly 60% had fewer than 3 per 100,000 (Glazer et al., JAMA Dermatology, 2017). Separately, about 16% of Americans live in a county with no dermatologist (Lu et al., JAMA Dermatology, 2026).

Dermatologist care



Prescription skincare



Source: Curology Gen Z Skin Health & Confidence Survey, June 2026 (n=1,930)

Gen Z isn’t asking for more skincare. They’re asking for more clarity.

01

Credible

Guidance grounded in dermatology, not the algorithm.

02

Personalized

Care built around one person’s skin, not the average.

03

Accessible

Professional care that’s easy to start and easy to keep.

04

Realistic

Honest timelines that build trust, not pressure.