

= Proactiv =

Proactiv , also known as Proactiv Solution , is a brand of skin @-@ care products developed by two American dermatologists , Katie Rodan and Kathy Fields , and launched in 1995 by Guthy @-@ Renker , a California @-@ based direct marketing company . The range includes moisturizers , body washes and hair products , but the brand is known for its three @-@ step anti @-@ acne kit consisting of a cleanser , toner and lotion . Proactiv + , a reformulation of the three @-@ step kit , was introduced in 2013 .

As a result of its celebrity endorsements and infomercials , Proactiv is one of the most popular skincare brands of all time , according to the Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology . Sales amounted to \$ 800 million a year as of 2010 , with a media budget of nearly \$ 200 million and \$ 12 ? 15 million for celebrity fees . The product is mostly sold online as part of a continuity program . A month after ordering , customers are sent a three @-@ month supply , which continues until the subscription is cancelled . Customers have complained that the subscriptions are hard to cancel .

According to a 2011 review , there have been few studies on the efficacy of Proactiv . A 2011 Consumer Reports study compared Proactiv with two less expensive types of benzoyl peroxide , AcneFree and OXY Maximum , and found all three to be equally effective . The US Food and Drug Administration warned in 2014 that over @-@ the @-@ counter acne treatments can cause severe irritation , as well as rare but life @-@ threatening allergic reactions .

= = History = =

= = = Product development = = =

Proactiv was created in the late 1980s by Katie Rodan and Kathy Fields , who met while at Stanford University School of Medicine .

Proactiv was offered to Neutrogena , which declined it , but its CEO , Allan Kurtzman , suggested selling it via infomercials . Guthy @-@ Renker were already in the infomercial business and agreed to market and distribute it . The first infomercial appeared in October 1995 , offering a money @-@ back guarantee and fast delivery , and featuring Judith Light , who suffered from acne problems herself . Rodan and Fields later founded their own skincare brand , Rodan + Fields .

= = = Guthy @-@ Renker = = =

Guthy @-@ Renker LLC is a direct @-@ response marketing company registered in Palm Desert , California . Founded in 1988 by Bill Guthy and Greg Renker , the company is known as " the Rolls Royce " of the infomercial industry . As of 2012 its portfolio of products was making \$ 1 @.@ 8 billion a year . The range includes Victoria Principal 's Principal Secret skincare (its earliest skincare brand) , Wen Hair Care , Cindy Crawford 's Meaningful Beauty skincare , the Dean Martin Celebrity Roast DVDs , and the Malibu Pilates Chair .

= = = Nestlé = = =

In March 2016 , Nestlé joined Guthy @-@ Renker as a majority owner of Proactiv .

= = Products = =

Proactiv is a registered trademark of Guthy @-@ Renker . The brand 's primary product is a three @-@ step kit comprising a cleanser , toner and lotion , which sells for \$ 20 a month in the United States if purchased as part of the continuity program .

The toner contains glycolic acid , an exfoliant , and witch hazel , an astringent . The active ingredient in the cleanser and lotion , outside Europe , is a 2 @.@ 5 percent concentration of

benzoyl peroxide , lower than in most prescription @-@ strength acne treatments . Benzoyl peroxide has been used since 1934 to kill Propionibacterium acnes , the bacterium that causes acne . Several over @-@ the @-@ counter acne treatments contain it , including Clean & Clear , Clearasil , Doctor 's Dermatologic Formula , Neutrogena Advanced Systems , PanOxyl and Stridex .

There is also a three @-@ step program in Extra Strength , with a 7 percent concentration of benzoyl peroxide , and a Gentle Formula that instead contains a 2 percent concentration of salicylic acid , an exfoliant . The three @-@ step kit in Europe is based on salicylic acid ; in the UK it costs £ 39 @.@ 99 (\$ 60) for a two @-@ month supply . Other Proactiv products include an oil @-@ free moisturizer that uses octinoxate (7 @.@ 5 percent) and zinc oxide (3 percent) , and an anti @-@ dandruff shampoo with a one percent concentration of zinc pyrithione .

Guthy @-@ Renker introduced Proactiv + in 2013 , charging \$ 30 in the United States for a month 's supply if the customer creates a subscription . It is a paraben @-@ free three @-@ step kit comprising a cleanser and toning gel , each with 2 @.@ 5 percent benzoyl peroxide , and a moisturizer with salicylic acid . It is reportedly more hydrating than the original program .

= = Safety and efficacy = =

Proactiv is aimed at customers with mild to moderate acne . According to a 2011 review , there have been few studies examining its efficacy . A 2007 study saw inflammatory lesions reduced by 39 percent in subjects using a combination of butenafine and benzoyl peroxide , compared with 34 percent in those using Proactiv containing only benzoyl peroxide . A physician suggested in Salon that its three @-@ step system might make it easier for teenagers to comply , but that the key to its success lay with its celebrity endorsements .

In 2011 Consumer Reports compared Proactiv (2 @.@ 5 percent benzoyl peroxide) with two less expensive products , AcneFree (2 @.@ 5 percent benzoyl peroxide) and OXY Maximum (10 percent benzoyl peroxide) . At the time a two @-@ month supply of Proactiv cost around \$ 40 in the US , AcneFree \$ 20 and OXY Maximum \$ 5 . Eighty @-@ three subjects , aged 14 to 40 , used one of the products twice a day for eight weeks . The magazine reported that , no matter which product was used , after two weeks around 75 percent of subjects saw a 35 percent reduction in blemishes on average . After eight weeks around 50 ? 66 percent saw a 40 percent reduction on average .

Benzoyl peroxide can have a drying effect on the skin , can cause erythema (redness) and fine scaling , though these effects are usually mild , and can increase sensitivity to sunlight . One in 500 may experience allergic contact dermatitis . It is categorized as a pregnancy category C agent , " suggesting that its use in pregnancy may not be prudent , " according to a literature review in the Journal of Clinical and Aesthetic Dermatology . If benzoyl peroxide comes into contact with clothing it is likely to bleach it .

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) warned in 2014 that over @-@ the @-@ counter acne products containing benzoyl peroxide and / or salicylic acid , including Proactiv , can cause severe irritation , as well as rare but life @-@ threatening allergic reactions . Consumers were advised to stop using the products if they experience hives or itching , and to seek emergency medical attention if they feel faint , or experience throat tightness , breathing problems , or swelling of the eyes , face , lips or tongue . The FDA noted that it remains unclear whether the reactions are caused by the active ingredients , inactive ingredients or a combination .

= = Sales and marketing = =

= = = Sales = = =

Proactiv is marketed and distributed by Guthy @-@ Renker , and is responsible for about half the company 's revenue . Sales of Proactiv amounted to \$ 800 million as of 2010 . Seventy percent of sales were in the United States as of 2007 .

The product is available in some stores , including Boots in the UK , and in kiosks and vending machines (known as ZoomShops) in malls and airports through a partnership between American Kiosk Management and Guthy @-@ Renker . But the product is mostly sold online or through a toll @-@ free number directly by Guthy @-@ Renker ; sixty percent of Proactiv orders were placed online as of 2010 .

= = = Continuity program = = =

Guthy @-@ Renker sells Proactiv as part of a continuity program , also known as a negative @-@ option offer , whereby customers are sent repeat orders until they cancel . When purchasing directly from the company , customers automatically become members of a Proactiv club . A month after ordering , and every three months thereafter , they are sent a three @-@ month supply costing \$ 60 (in the US as of 2011) , plus shipping and handling . They are billed monthly until they cancel the subscription . The approach is based on the customer lifetime value model .

Customers have complained that they have created subscriptions inadvertently and found them difficult to cancel . The most common complaints about Guthy @-@ Renker , according to Truth in Advertising , are unauthorized billing , difficulty cancelling orders , billing for products that never arrive , unhelpful customer service , and refusing refunds despite money @-@ back guarantees .

= = = Commercials = = =

Guthy @-@ Renker had a media budget of \$ 200 million for Proactive as of 2010 , much of it spent on air @-@ time , and was spending another \$ 12 ? 15 million a year on celebrity endorsements . Justin Bieber for example , was paid \$ 3 million over two years . Its infomercials have featured celebrities who have themselves suffered from acne problems ; the list includes Kelly Clarkson , P. Diddy , Avril Lavigne , Lindsay Lohan , Alyssa Milano , Katy Perry , Jessica Simpson , Britney Spears and Vanessa Williams .

According to the New York Times , until 2010 Proactiv infomercials were " fast @-@ talking " and " hard @-@ selling " ; an announcer repeatedly advised viewers to " call now , " and offered faster shipping if the order was placed within three minutes . As infomercials became less popular , Proactiv sales stalled . Since 2010 Guthy @-@ Renker has tried to move the brand into the mainstream cosmetics market , focusing on quality rather than price . It began advertising on network television during shows like American Idol , and in Elle , InStyle and People magazines . It also expanded into social media and mobile marketing . As of 2010 Proactiv had 1 @.@ 5 million views on its YouTube channel , 41 @,@ 000 Facebook fans , and 8 @,@ 700 Twitter followers .

In 2012 the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in the UK banned some of Proactiv 's advertising as misleading . A viewer complained that the celebrities were likely to have used the US version of Proactiv , which differs from the UK version . According to the ASA , the celebrities had signed statements saying they had used the UK version for a few weeks one to three years earlier , but the advertisements gave the appearance that they had continued to benefit from it , so the viewer 's complaint was upheld .