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A Comprehensive Review on Lip Balm

*Samruddhi A. Avhad*¹, Amol S. Deshmukh², Gargi V. Bachhav¹*

¹Students, K. V. N. Naik S. P. Sanstha's, Institute of Pharmaceutical Education & Research, Nashik, 422002, Maharashtra, India.

²Department of Pharmaceutics, K. V. N. Naik S. P. Sanstha's, Institute of Pharmaceutical Education & Research, Nashik, 422002, Maharashtra, India.

Corresponding Author:

Samruddhi Avhad, Students, K. V. N. Naik S. P. Sanstha's, Institute of Pharmaceutical Education & Research, Nashik, 422002, Maharashtra, India.

Email Id: serviceheb@gmail.com

Abstract

The lips are anatomically distinct from the rest of the skin: they lack sebaceous glands, carry minimal melanin, and present a thinner stratum corneum than any other facial surface. These structural facts make them disproportionately vulnerable to transepidermal water loss, photodamage, and environmental irritation. Lip balm, in its broadest definition, is a semisolid or waxy topical preparation designed to prevent or reverse this damage by forming an occlusive or emollient film on the vermilion surface. Modern formulations draw on a wide material palette: waxes (beeswax, carnauba, candelilla), fixed oils (castor, coconut, almond), butters (shea, cocoa), humectants (glycerine, honey), antioxidants (tocopherol), and, where sun protection is intended, inorganic UV filters such as zinc oxide and titanium dioxide. Manufacturing follows a melt-and-pour sequence, with quality control governed by parameters including pH, melting point, spreadability, hardness, moisture retention, and SPF determination where applicable. Herbal lip balms, incorporating ingredients such as aloe vera, turmeric, liquorice, and beetroot, have gained traction in both research literature and consumer markets. Medicated variants extend the category into antiviral, anti-inflammatory, and wound-healing territory. This review synthesizes the current evidence base for lip balm ingredients, methods, evaluation, and safety, and identifies the gaps that most need filling.

Keywords: Lip Balm, Emollient, Cosmetic Formulation, Wax

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