



Healthy Skin from the Inside Out

The skin is a reflection of your general state of health. Although I can't stress enough the importance of sunscreen, to have truly healthy skin, start from the inside out.

The ABCs for healthy skin are:

ANTIOXIDANTS AND ANTI-INFLAMMATORY SUPPLEMENTS

To counteract damage from free radicals and inflammation, supplement with a good multivitamin that contains vitamin A: 2,500 to 5,000 IU; beta carotene, 25,000 IU; a balanced B complex (which includes all the B vitamins); vitamin C with bioflavonoid, 500 to 1,000 mg; natural E with mixed tocopherols, 200 IU for younger people and 400 or more if you are older than about 35. Add an anti-inflammatory fish oil: 2 to 3 grams; the master antioxidant, alpha lipoic acid, 100 mg, as well as coenzyme Q10, 30 to 100 mg. These act synergistically at the various pathways for skin health and all are essential, however, the doses may vary with age and state of health.

BLOOD FLOW

Adequate amounts of water and aerobic activity can increase blood flow to your skin and deliver the nutrients it needs for collagen production and antioxidant protection. You know you are drinking enough water if your urine is pale yellow, usually at least six to eight 8-ounce glasses daily. The amount needed will vary in accordance with the temperature and activity level. There is nothing like the healthy glow after a workout. Try at least 20 minutes of aerobic exercise daily. If you can't fit it into one session, break it up into three 10-minute intervals.

CUTTING-EDGE NUTRIENTS

Lutein and zeaxanthin are antioxidants thought to filter the high-energy, blue wavelengths of light from the visible light spectrum. Evidence suggests that lutein and zeaxanthin in kale, spinach and chard may protect against sun damage; carnosine in turkey maintains elasticity and amino acids in protein build collagen. Choline-stabilized orthosilicic acid, a compound

ASK DR. MAITA

Need more information about your skin or your health?

Go to our blog at savvyliving.com and direct your questions to Dr. Maita.

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found in dilute concentrations in mineral water of stabilized choline and silicon, can activate the pathways that generate collagen, reduce wrinkles and increase skin elasticity. It is also available as a supplement.

DIGESTION

Probiotics are beneficial bacteria that make biotin, folic acid and niacin, and keep harmful bacteria from growing out of control. They have also been shown to decrease inflammation. Food intolerances and imbalances of helpful and harmful bacteria can play a role in the development of skin rashes, eczema and allergic dermatitis.

Studies have shown that a probiotic supplement is beneficial in the treatment of these conditions. Eliminating any foods that cause rashes or other adverse effects can clear up a variety of skin conditions. In addition, probiotics contribute to good digestive health, which is essential to absorb nutrients essential for skin growth and repair. Look for a supplement with at least 10 to 20 billion CFU (colony forming units), however, the dose is dependent on the condition being treated. Start low and go slow to avoid gas and bloating.

When it comes to eating foods with live active cultures, the organisms typically found in these foods are often not the same microbes for which significant research data exists regarding health benefits. The freeze-dried form of probiotics (powdered and necessary to refrigerate) is most stable and easily used by the body. Buy a dairy-free variety to avoid any intolerances you may have.

EVERYTHING YOU EAT

Eating an anti-inflammatory, hypoallergenic diet nourishes skin and can treat acne, allergic dermatitis, eczema and psoriasis. Saturated fats found in meat dairy and oils that are solid at room temperature, hydrogenated oils and trans-fats form inflammatory eicosonoids that send signals to constrict blood vessels, form mucous and create an inflammatory response.

On the flip side, foods high in anti-inflammatory fats, such as olive and canola oil, avocado, almonds, walnuts and cold water fish such as mackerel, salmon, tuna and herring, have the opposite effect. Eat less saturated fat and more anti-inflammatory fats to make your skin soft, supple and prevent drying and inflammation. Avoid foods you are allergic to or that cause breakouts or rashes. 

Lorraine Maita is board certified in internal medicine and anti-aging and regenerative medicine. She has more than 18 years experience in preventive health and wellness, internal, occupational, travel medicine and executive health.