



Gimme Some (Healthy) Skin

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Our skin is the only organ of our body that we can see. With a wisdom all its own, it is a magnificent barrier between our inner and outer selves, often communicating with us in ways that cause frustration or that many of us are unsure how to interpret. We try to mask its imperfections and camouflage its flaws and we lotion and potion in the quest for a more youthful look.

Don't Shoot the Messenger

Skin conditions are not just skin conditions. What's inside will always come out. Our skin is the great communicator (think megaphone) when it comes to imbalances and chronic health issues and it's up to us to look beneath the surface for the underlying problem. This amazing sheath is linked to all our major bodily functions, including the respiratory, immune, circulatory, and lymph systems. As a result, addressing issues with any of these systems will improve the luster, glow, and condition of your skin.

The most common chronic skin conditions are dry skin, acne, premature aging, eczema, and rosacea, all of which have been linked to chronic inflammation. But this is good news! With proper diet and supplementation, inflammation can be curbed and skin conditions (among other health imbalances) radically improved. Because premature aging is, contrary to popular belief, biological vs. chronological, it can be significantly slowed or even reversed with a holistic approach that includes an anti-inflammatory diet.

The Common Culprits

Customary causes of inflammation are inadequate water intake, a high-sugar and high-refined carbohydrate diet, artificial and chemical-rich foods, stress, a sedentary lifestyle, hormone imbalances, and undiagnosed food allergies or sensitivities. Free radicals, which are the prime causes of many degenerative diseases, add fuel to the inflammatory fire and can fortunately be counteracted with antioxidant-rich foods.

Before you try the next miracle cream, acid, or antibiotic, consider these natural approaches for healthy skin. You may not see the immediate results you would with chemical-laden creams and drugs that only mask the symptom, but if you steady-on with these healthful solutions, you'll see amazing results with your skin condition, and have more energy and vitality to boot!

Some powerful antioxidants:

List adapted from Prescription for Nutrition Healing, Phyllis A. Balch

- Alpha-lipoic acid (ALA) – found in spinach, broccoli, organ meats, and supplementation
- Bilberry
- Burdock
- Carotenoids (phytonutrients found in the red, yellow and orange flesh of plant leaves, flowers and fruit)

HEALTHFUL ELEMENTS



- Coenzyme Q-10
- Flavonoids – found in fruits and vegetables (best sources are apples, blueberries, bilberries, onions, soy products and tea)
- Garlic
- Ginkgo Biloba
- Green Tea
- Turmeric
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin E
- Zinc

Dietary suggestions:

- Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day.
- Sleuth out any food sensitivities by embarking on a simple elimination/provocation diet.
- Eat whole foods with relatively low glycemic index values.
- Get your mercury- and PCB-free fish oil. Omega 3 fatty acids possess anti-inflammatory properties and keep skin moisturized at a deep level.
- Avoid or limit sugar, artificial sweeteners, alcohol, caffeine, food additives, trans fats, and refined carbohydrates, as these are highly inflammatory to many people, especially those with acne and rosacea.
- Take a probiotic supplement to support beneficial anti-inflammatory flora in the intestines.
- Cleanse your system with a detox program, available at your health food store.

I challenge you to open the lines of communication with your skin. After all, you and your skin are in a long-term relationship. If you become adept at listening to what it tells you and treating it with the right nutrients, you just might find that other nagging health issues resolve themselves naturally.

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