

Dieting Tips to Care for Your Skin

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What You Put on Your Plate Is Even More Important Than What You Put on Your Skin

Healthy skin is one of the best ways to look younger. Vibrant and young-looking skin can glow and make us feel better about our appearance. The easiest way to get healthy skin is by eating a healthy diet and drinking plenty of water. "The healthier the foods are that you consume, the better your skin will look," says Samantha Heller, MS, RD, a clinical nutritionist at NYU Medical Center in New York City.



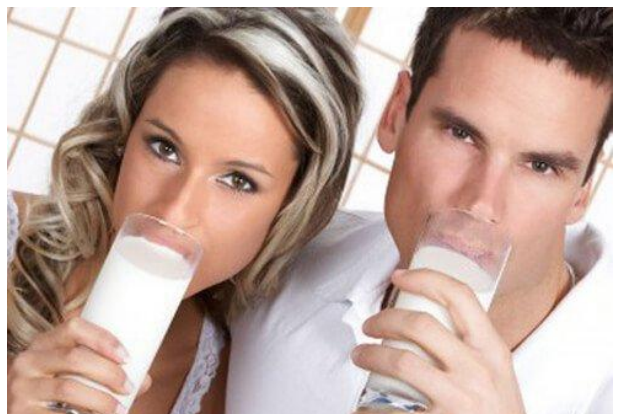
Starve Your Skin Long Enough and It Will Show

When you don't eat healthy foods, it will show on your skin and you may find you look older and more tired. Diets lacking nutrients essential to healthy skin can cause your skin to become dry, with a sallow complexion. A consistently unhealthy diet can lead to more serious skin conditions including acne, eczema, and psoriasis. "Any number of chronic skin problems can be directly linked to diet," says biochemist Elaine Linker, PhD, cofounder of DDF skin care.



What Are Foods for Healthy Skin?

Eating a balanced diet and drinking plenty of water is the best way to get the nutrients needed for healthy, young-looking skin. Some foods are touted for their benefits to your complexion. We will talk about some of the best foods to eat for glowing, healthy skin on the following slides.



Low-Fat Dairy Products

Low-fat dairy products are excellent sources of vitamin A, an important component of healthy skin. Vitamin A is essential for skin cell development, and getting adequate amounts in the diet can maintain strong, supple skin. Low-fat yogurt also contains "live" bacteria called acidophilus which is good for digestive health. Healthy digestion can ensure all the nutrients you consume are absorbed by the body, which in turn can lead to healthy-looking skin.



"If you have diabetes or thyroid problems, it's doubly important to eat vitamin A-rich dairy foods because your body can't convert beta carotene into vitamin A," says nutrition expert Liz Lipski, PhD, CCN, CHN, the founder and director of InnovativeHealing.com and the author of *Digestive Wellness*.

Blackberries, Blueberries, Strawberries, and Plums

Blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, and plums are fruits with high antioxidant content. Our skin is exposed to free radicals on a daily basis. Free radicals come from things such as sun exposure or pollution, and are responsible for skin damage and skin aging. Antioxidants such as those found in berries can destroy these free radicals and protect cells from further damage and premature skin aging. Other foods that are good sources of antioxidants include artichokes, beans (such as black, red, and pinto), prunes, and pecans according to a study in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*.



Salmon, Walnuts, Canola Oil, and Flaxseed

Essential fatty acids help keep cell membranes healthy. Healthy skin cells hold moisture better, which results in plumper, younger-looking skin. Good sources of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids include salmon, walnuts, canola oil, and flaxseed. Essential fatty acids also protect against inflammation, which is good for our hearts and arteries, as well as our skin.



Healthy Oils

Good-quality oils such as those labeled cold pressed, expeller processed, or extra virgin help keep skin lubricated and looking and feeling healthier. Commercially pressed oils are heated to high temperatures, where nutrients are lost. Cold-pressed or expeller-pressed oils maintain nutrients. "You get all the nutrients that are not only good for your skin but good for your body," says Lipski. But remember, even healthy fats are high in calories, so limit them to no more than 2 tablespoons per day.



Turkey, Tuna, Brazil Nuts, and Whole-Wheat Bread, Muffins, and Cereals

Selenium is a type of antioxidant. As we discussed earlier, antioxidants help protect the skin from free radicals, which can damage the skin, such as those from sun exposure. It may even help protect your skin from sunburn. Researchers at Edinburgh University showed that when levels of selenium were high, skin cells were less likely to suffer the kind of oxidative damage that can increase the risk of cancer. Good sources of selenium include turkey, tuna, brazil nuts, and whole-wheat bread, muffins, and cereals.



Green Tea

Green tea is known for its anti-inflammatory properties, and for its ability to help protect cell membranes. Whether you drink it or apply it to the skin, a 2000 study in the *Archives of Dermatology* showed green tea might help reduce the risk of damage from UV rays from the sun, which may reduce the risk for skin cancer. It's also full of those antioxidants and polyphenols (anti-inflammatories) that we know are good for the skin.



Water

Drinking adequate water each day is good for your body overall. As much as 60% of our bodies are comprised of water. Good old-fashioned pure drinking water – not other liquids such as soda or soup – is what your skin cells need to stay hydrated which will help your skin look more plump and younger. Water also helps cells move nutrients in and toxins out, which can help keep your skin looking healthy. Further, when we are hydrated, we sweat more efficiently, which keeps skin clear. "It is my belief that our skin needs at least a 1/2 gallon of good, clean water -- that's about eight glasses -- every day," says Lipski.



Sources:

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