



Face the Facts

Does food, your lifestyle or the environment affect your skin? Absolutely. Read on and discover how to stay flawless forever

BY NYKIA SPRADLEY

BEAUTY

It's time to whip your skin into its best shape. Get glowing with a get-healthy plan that starts from the inside, and craft a stay-young regimen with the help of some innovative creams and serums.

You Are What You Eat

Most of us know that what we ingest manifests itself through our skin. A healthy diet not only helps your body but also pumps essential nutrients to our most visible organ. Black tea, green tea, garlic and walnuts have long been on our beautiful-skin radar, but board-certified dermatologist Jeanette Jacknin believes you should also consider the following:

- **Zinc** Found in oysters, beef, wheat germ, spinach, pumpkin seeds and cashews, it regulates overactive oil glands. Zinc also decreases the formation of damaging free radicals and protects the cells that make collagen when skin is exposed to UV light or pollution.
- **Fermented foods** Kimchi, sauerkraut and kombucha, for example, help balance microflora in the gut and improve digestion—which results in clearer skin.
- **Green herbs** Cooked kale and romaine lettuce are high in vitamin A. The immune enhancer reduces skin inflammation.

Jacknin notes that zinc is a true powerhouse: "It helps heal the skin and control inflammation, and produces and transports new cells up to broken skin. Even healthy, intact skin relies on zinc for new cell

production and the function of cell membranes. Zinc may help ward off acne flare-ups and can also boost immune function." For the average woman, Jacknin recommends a dose of ten milligrams a day. That's the equivalent of three ounces of beef or a cup of sunflower seeds.

TOPPING IT OFF

A healthy diet is imperative for good skin, but some dermatologists like Gary Goldfaden suggest adding topical products to the daily menu. "When you eat, the skin is the last place to receive nutrients," says Goldfaden. "It gets the least amount of ingested goodness." Topical treatments add extra nourishment, especially ones full of nutritious ingredients such as quinoa, a favorite of Goldfaden's (bottom far right). "Quinoa contains a high level of riboflavin, which provides elasticity to the skin and increases the production of connective tissue to help tone the skin and prevent the appearance of wrinkles." Protein is also essential because it helps build and repair the tissue of muscle, skin, nails and hair. "By applying protein topically, through skin care products [like those with quinoa], you can achieve a healthy, youthful appearance," says Goldfaden.

Contains polyphenols and catechins, antioxidants that maintain skin-cell health and protect the skin against environmental pollutants.

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Fights acne with a large amount of allicin, a compound with antibacterial and antimicrobial properties.

Very high in omega-3 essential fatty acids, antioxidants and selenium.

Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which help to combat inflammation.

DR. SEBAGH
Suprême Maintenance Youth Serum (\$400, 60 ml, net-a-porter.com)
Contains resveratrol (found in red wine), a remarkable antioxidant.

ORIGINS
Three Part Harmony Nourishing Cream (\$69, origins.com)
The white narcissus lily bulb can wake up the skin's normal reparative functions.

RESERVEAGE
NUTRITION Collagen Replenish Powder (\$18, reserveage.com)
Add powder to water or shakes to aid collagen production.

GOLDFADEN MD
Plant Profusion Energetic Eye Cream (\$145, goldfadenmd.com)
The quinoa in this cream helps improve skin elasticity.

“After 30, we lose about a teaspoon of collagen a year.” —BROOKE JACKSON, M.D.

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Holding Back the Years

THE COLLAGEN CONNECTION

According to Goldfaden, 25 to 35 percent of our body's protein content consists of collagen. Over time, the percentage decreases due to glycation, sun damage, environmental stressors and general aging. "After 30, we lose about a teaspoon of collagen a year," says Brooke Jackson, M.D., founder of Skin Wellness Dermatology Associates in Durham, North Carolina, opening next month. Then there is another significant drop during menopause. Thankfully, there have been advancements in skin care products to help. Truflora's Night Serum 85 (\$80, truflora.com), for example, is designed to restimulate collagen production. Ingestible collagen is also an option. Reserveage Nutrition Collagen Replenish Powder (below left) aims to boost the body's own collagen and elastin production. Retinoids can also support collagen stimulation. "I tell my patients that the use of retinoid is like a deposit into your skin's 401(k). You do not see the benefit immediately, but in the long term you will absolutely reap the benefits," says Jackson. Try Dr. Dennis Gross Ferulic + Retinol Wrinkle Recovery Peel (\$88, Sephora) two to three times a week.

DAILY DEFENSE

"Aging from cumulative exposure to the sun is known as extrinsic aging," says Nada Elbuluk, a dermatologist at the NYU Langone Medical Center. Sun protection is the first and one of the most important components of an antiaging regimen. "I recommend the use of a sunscreen with SPF 30+ every morning, year-round," says Elbuluk. Apply it all the way down to the décolleté, and remember that sunscreen lasts only for about two hours. So if you're going to be outside for an extended period, it needs to be reapplied. It's also an excellent idea to get in your antioxidants daily. They fight free-radical damage (details on the next page), which causes premature aging. Some great ones are vitamin C, green or black tea, coffee and the extraordinary resveratrol. ▷

Getting to the Good Life

STRESSING LESS

Stress is just one of many factors that affect our skin—it's also one of the biggest. "Stress is an immune mediator. Whether it's physical or emotional, it compromises your immune system and can exacerbate conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, eczema or acne," says Jackson. How to manage tension depends on its cause. "Stress experienced from a work deadline is different from the kind you'd feel when dealing with a family illness," Jackson continues. "If all you have is five minutes, unplug—no cell, no computer. With the lights off, lie down and take slow deep breaths."

SLEEPING BEAUTY

Sleep deprivation, another bad lifestyle habit, can show itself in the form of under-eye puffiness and sallown, pale and dull-looking skin. Lucky for us, a new crop of creams can help with the skin-rejuvenating process that takes place while we sleep. The sweet spot for the number of hours you should be getting in each night is around seven. Your sleep routine is just as important. So nix the noise and light, eat a small dinner and—as difficult as it may be—disconnect from your devices. All these distractions will interfere with the quality of your nocturnal rest and, ultimately, affect your skin.

CLEAN LIVING

Not to stress you out any further, but environmental factors significantly affect the aging process. Thanks to those trusted antioxidants, we can regain some control over the deleterious impact. "Topical antioxidants can direct cell metabolism to increase normal sloughing of the skin. They can improve fine lines and make the skin appear brighter," says Amy McMichael, M.D., chair of dermatology at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Washing your face twice daily is important to remove dirt, debris, other pollutants and dead skin cells, but there's a fine line between cleaning and overdoing it. On the one hand, "not washing can exacerbate current skin conditions and lead to a buildup of dead skin, which could make one's face appear duller," says Elbuluk. But cleansing too often or with too harsh of a product can actually dry out or irritate your skin and make you look older. So find your balance. Wash and moisturize (then apply an antioxidant and SPF!) daily and exfoliate as needed.

Antioxidants can improve fine lines and make the skin brighter." —AMY McMICHAEL, M.D.

◆ **Elizabeth Arden** Prevage Anti-Aging Daily Serum (\$162, elizabetharden.com) This idebenone-rich serum helps lessen the effects of environmental aggressors, such as pollution and smoking.

◆ **ESTÉE LAUDER** NightWear Plus Anti-Oxidant Night Detox Creme (\$55, esteelauder.com) This dream cream promises to counteract environmental damage while you sleep.

Block the light and sleep tight.

Earth Therapeutics Dream Zone Sleep Mask (\$6, drugstore.com).



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