

Total Nutrition

Put Your Best Face Forward With Nutrition For Your Skin

(NAPSA)—Healthy skin requires a healthy diet. We have you covered when it comes to the latest science concerning the connection between what you eat and healthy skin.

Healthy skin means paying attention to what you eat

The link between nutrition and skin has captured the attention of the cosmetic industry and with that comes all sorts of other possibilities. Drug store shelves are lined with creams; lotions and body wash products containing vitamins to “feed your skin.” But research shows the best way to treat your skin with the nutrients it needs is from the inside out.

The big picture

The cells that make up your skin get their nutrition and fuel from the foods you eat. A well-balanced diet, rich in fruits, vegetables, grains, water and more, provides the nutrients necessary to help keep skin healthy and radiant. A poor diet, one lacking variety and therefore the nutrients needed for the growth and care of healthy cells, may leave the skin susceptible to damage from the sun, pollution and other environmental factors.

Specific nutrients

Arguably, every vitamin and mineral has a role in keeping the skin healthy because every vitamin and mineral is involved in the strength and vitality of cells. However, there are a few nutrients that are more influential.

Vitamins C, E and beta-carotene aid in the repair of damaged skin cells and help in the growth of new ones. They also moonlight as antioxidants, which means they fight against free radicals—substances known to attack and damage cells. The skin is exposed to a number of environmental factors each day that can result in the development of free radicals. They are believed to be partially responsible for premature aging of the skin as well as skin cancer. Studies suggest that vitamins C, E and beta-carotene protect against skin damage by hunting down free radicals and disarming them.

Research suggests that fish oils are also good for skin health. Omega-3 fatty acids, the type of fat found in some fish, may reduce inflammation of the skin caused by sun exposure and may protect healthy cells from turning into cancerous ones.

Cosmetics

It is unclear whether the nutrients put in creams and lotions offer much benefit to the skin, says Tracy Gannon, M.D., a dermatologist in St. Paul, Minn. “We have not seen much evidence that these types of over-the-counter products help. People can pay a lot for who knows what.”

According to Gannon, there are no guidelines for how much of a particular nutrient should be in a product. Therefore, there are no assurances that the ingredients in a cosmetic product will work to help skin. Gannon recommends clients talk with a dermatologist about creams and supplements before using them. “We can help consumers determine the best way to care for their skin. Part of our discussion most certainly includes information about a healthy diet.”

A Great Start Toward Total Nutrition—Choose from the foods listed below to get plenty of skin-loving nutrients.

SUPER SKIN NUTRITION

Nutrient/Where to get it

Vitamin C—Citrus fruits and juices, strawberries, kiwi, dark green vegetables, Total cereal or other cereal with 100% DV of Vitamin C

Vitamin E—Sunflower seeds, nuts, some fortified ready-to-eat cereals, vegetable oils, Total cereal or other cereal with 100% DV of Vitamin E

Beta-carotene (also called Vitamin A)—Orange, deep yellow and dark green fruits and vegetables, tomatoes

Omega-3 fatty acids—Salmon, lake trout, tuna, mackerel, herring

