



Nourishing Your Skin

Aging is a process that *can* be controlled. The foods you consume are an essential part of managing your body's aging. Nowhere else is the effect of nutrition so apparent to your eye and the eye of others than in your body's largest organ, the skin. **YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT.**

With so many diets promoted in our culture, how is optimal health achieved through nutrition? To maintain healthy skin, you should avoid foods that produce oxidation in your body or stimulate an immune or allergic response.

Think of nutrition in terms of macronutrients, micronutrients, and phytochemicals.

Macronutrients are carbohydrates, fats, and proteins. With the popularity of high protein diets, I will address this one first. You can lose weight on a high protein diet, but it's not a balanced diet that

will help you achieve maximal health. Protein promotes an immune response in our bodies, and the portion of protein in most American's diets should be decreased. If your skin is experiencing redness or breakouts, try eliminating milk from your diet, as its protein can cause an allergic reaction.

Control the quality of fat in your diet. Monounsaturated fats are healthy fats. These include olive oil, grape seed oil, and sunflower oil. Nuts contain healthy fats, but should be eaten in small quantities. Omega 3 fatty acids are important to prevent many disorders and should be in your diet three days a week. Fish from cool weather areas, such as salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines, bluefish, and albacore tuna, are good sources. Flax seed is another good source. Look for organic eggs from chickens with omega 3 fatty acids added to their diet.

Any product with partially hydrogenated listed on its label is unhealthy. Most breads and processed foods contain this fat. Get these foods out of your cupboard! Don't eat margarine, and use butter in moderation.

Carbohydrates should be consumed in fruits, vegetables, and breads. Select fruits with a low glycemic index - those with a slower rise in blood sugar and longer insulin response. These fruits - pears, apples, cherries, berries, and white peaches - help keep your energy level stable. Eat vegetables in a variety of colors to get the best distribution of vitamins and minerals. Green leafy vegetables provide

roughage to aid digestion. Whole grains, beans and legumes should round out the remainder of carbohydrates in your diet.

What else should you avoid? Don't fry foods. If barbecuing, cook for shorter periods of time to avoid charring. Alcohol robs your body of vitamins and minerals. Keep consumption to no more than one drink a day.

Drink lots of water in a purified and cleansed form. I suggest installing a reverse osmosis system in your home, which removes unwanted minerals and sediment from water. Tea and flavored waters are also healthy beverages, but coffee and soft drinks are not.

The subject of micronutrients is complex, so I'll keep it short. These are the vitamins and minerals that our body uses as medicine to heal itself from the effects of aging and/or stress. A good source for a multivitamin is at www.emersonecology.com. The most important vitamin and mineral supplements are mixed carotenes, vitamin C, vitamin D, natural vitamin E, selenium, zinc, copper, manganese, calcium, and magnesium. These increase cellular energy so the skin can repair, renew, and revitalize itself. Evening primrose oil or borage oil aid in the reduction of eczema. Support thyroid function with sea kelp, seafood, and iodized sea salt.

The next time you go shopping, here are some suggestions:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables are best
- Choose vegetables in a variety of colors, purchase cool-weather fruits, and

- include berries
- Eliminate processed food from your list
- Buy olive oil
- Read labels, and don't buy partially hydrogenated anything
- If there are too many words on the ingredients list on the label, don't buy it
- Include omega 3 fats in your diet
- Drink water

Finally, have fun with food, and enjoy it. Eating a healthy meal with family and friends feels good, benefits your body, and produces vibrant skin quality and tone.

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