

Where is your face?

When trekking in Nepal, a monk posed a question to me. He asked “Where is your face?” I have been contemplating this for many years. One thing I do know is that my face the part of me that the world sees and communicates with first, so taking care of my skin is a priority.



Eating a healthy diet of fresh foods is the best agenda for retaining healthy, supple skin as you age. Our cells use oxygen to produce energy and they generate free radicals as a byproduct of this and create an inflammatory response. Acne is an inflammatory skin condition. Inflammatory chemicals create oxidative stress, which, in turn, damages the skin cells.

Foods rich in antioxidants help destroy free radicals which cause inflammation and negatively affect the skin. In addition to a healthy diet make sure to wear sunblock when outdoors and keep your skin moisturized night and day.

Here are some guidelines for “skin food”

- Produce for Your Skin

All fruits and vegetables are rich in antioxidants to keep your skin healthy and fresh looking. Delicious and colorful berries are considered to be one of the best fruits for healthy skin and are a great source of polyphenols, antioxidants that are being studied for their anti-aging capabilities. Choose strawberries, blueberries, blackberries and raspberries. When berries are out of season, try the frozen-food case. Also try cranberry and fresh pomegranate seeds. Their vitamin C helps reconstruct collagen, the scaffolding that keeps skin from drooping.

- Richly colored leafy greens like spinach, kale, swiss chard and collards are high in antioxidants. Plus, they're a great source of iron when eaten with vitamin C rich foods. (People who don't get enough iron are especially prone to dark circles under their eyes). Greens also contain zinc. Zinc helps break down damaged collagen, allowing new collagen to form.
- Vitamin C anti-oxidants in fruits, like tomatoes, and other dark red, orange and yellow fruits and vegetables help keep skin elastic and prevent bruising. Vitamin A aids in healing acne from the inside out by boosting resistance to infection. Both are skin cancer-fighting nutrients.

Liquids

- Drinking lots of pure water daily will help keep your skin hydrated. Water is the most important nutrient you consume. Drink half your body weight in ounces of water each

day. Enjoy several cups of green tea each day, loaded with antioxidants to reduce inflammation and puffiness around the eyes, but don't substitute it for pure and mineral rich water from Artesian wells or natural springs if possible.

### Dairy Products

- Dairy products are rich in vitamin A and beneficial for healthy skin as long as you are not sensitive or allergic to the proteins in dairy milk. Enjoy some yogurt, rich in live bacteria and calcium, which aids digestion and clears skin. For double benefit, add fresh berries to your plain yogurt and a bit of honey for sweetness. Low-fat cheese and milk, rich in vitamins and calcium, also help you retain clear and healthy skin.

### Healthy Oils

- Get adequate essential fatty acids in your diet for healthy cell membranes. Fatty-acids include Omega 3 and Omega 6. Fatty acids reduce inflammation and help retain moisture in the skin. The best foods containing these nutrients are fresh cold-water fish such as salmon, halibut and sardines. Olive oil, flaxseed oil, grapeseed oil and avocado oil containing vitamin E are most beneficial when cold pressed and organic. Essential fatty-acids are also available in supplement form. Keep oils in a dark glass bottle in the refrigerator.
- Just a tablespoon daily may make a huge difference to dry skin. If clogged pores are a problem, the essential fatty acids in these vegetable oils can help keep them clear by thinning the oils they secrete.

### Nuts, Seeds and Grains

- Try wide variety of whole grains by selecting SPROUTED whole grain bread, oatmeal, barley and whole grain pasta. Try quinoa pasta if you are gluten sensitive. Quinoa's protein is of an unusually high quality. It is a complete protein, with an essential amino acid balance close to the ideal ... similar to milk! These foods are rich in the B vitamins which assist in building new cells. Nuts and seeds are rich in vitamin E as well as other vitamins and minerals to support clear skin.

Dorothy Sager is a Nutritional Therapist, Personal Trainer and Wellcoach®. Her experience as a Raw Food Chef aligns whole food nutrition with delicious eating. In her professional practice she helps clients achieve personal wellness goals and make lasting lifestyle changes.

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