



HEALTHY SKIN FROM THE INSIDE OUT

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When I entered practice as a Plastic Surgeon, little did I know how limited my knowledge of nutrition was. Yes, we had covered aspects of nutrition in physiology and biochemistry classes in medical school; but much of what I learned in my residency training as a surgeon was related to diagnosing and treating conditions, surgically for the most part. Little by little I grew to appreciate the overwhelming role of nutrition in the lives of my patients. Since many of our eating habits develop when we are young, they can be very hard to change. Further, the growth of 'agribusiness,' fast foods, convenience foods and intense marketing and advertising on the part of the food 'industry,' has done little good in promoting healthy eating habits.

Many of my patients are concerned about the aging changes they are seeing in their skin. At this time, there is really nothing that is going to stop the aging of our skin and to some degree we simply need to accept aging as a natural part of our existence. However, we don't need to accelerate it and certainly much

can be done to slow its progress. We have peels, lasers, skin care products, injectable fillers and surgeries to manage aging skin. These all have their place in treating the aging changes we see in our skin. But what about our general health habits? Doesn't it make sense to optimize our health and therefore the health of our skin? Let's look briefly at some of the things we can do as individuals to create healthier skin. Healthy skin is usually a byproduct of healthy living. As such, our habits and dietary choices play a large role in how our skin looks and ages. When we are young our bodies are typically healthier and seemingly appear immune to whatever we throw at them. Because of our youth and perhaps some good 'genes,' we may get the impression when we're young that eating well is really not important since we can down soft drinks, fries and all manner of questionably healthy foods without any apparent health or skin problems. Unfortunately, as we age the cumulative damage we've done to our bodies begins to come home to roost. Healthy skin is a result of many body organs working together efficiently.

HERE ARE A FEW OF THE IMPORTANT ORGANS

+ LIVER AND KIDNEY +
These organs are responsible for filtering out impurities and detoxifying the body. Reducing the load of foreign chemicals, toxins and poisons we ingest can reduce the chance that these organs become overworked. Drugs, alcohol and environmental chemicals and toxins all put added stress on the liver.

+ THYROID ++
This gland helps to establish the metabolic rate of the body and therefore energy production. A sluggish thyroid can be associated with dry, flaky and dull appearing skin.

+ ADRENAL GLANDS +++
These glands help produce many of the hormones associated with healthy skin such as DHEA, Estrogen and Testosterone.

+ THE INTESTINES ++++
The intestines are responsible for the absorption and assimilation of nutrients as well as the elimination of toxic waste products.

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So what can one do to support the health of these organ systems which in turn support the health of the skin? Here is a list of recommendations. It is not comprehensive, but is a good starting point for someone wanting to take control of their health with the side benefit of improving the appearance of their skin. All of these are within the control of each person. They are simple and usually cost saving.

- 01 Avoid heavily processed foods and highly 'sugared' foods.
- 02 Include as many whole fruits or vegetables as possible in your diet.
- 03 Do not smoke. Cigarette smoke is a potent combination of numerous systemic toxins.
- 04 Reduce alcohol intake. Alcohol is a poison and a liver toxin.
- 05 Eliminate unnecessary drugs.
- 06 Exercise at least five times a week.
- 07 Include plenty of pure water in your diet.

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So if you want the best skin possible, remember that your health choices will go a long way in maintaining a great complexion and reducing your need of more aggressive skin therapies as you age.

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