

Nutrition and the Skin Fact Sheet

Skin can benefit from the same nutrition we get from foods that have a positive effect on our heart and other major organs

Good Food, Good Skin

- Follow the recommendations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *Daily Food Guide*, commonly known as the food pyramid
- Antioxidants in vitamins C and E can protect skin from sun damage and help reduce damage in skin cells caused by harmful free radicals, which contribute to aging skin
- The B vitamin biotin is responsible for forming the basis of skin, hair and nail cells
- Vitamin A, found in many fruits and vegetables, maintains and repairs skin tissue
- Drink plenty of water so the skin stays hydrated

Foods That Can Worsen Skin Conditions

- Eating certain foods or consuming alcohol could aggravate symptoms or trigger a flare-up in patients with acne, rosacea, eczema or psoriasis
- Acne is not caused by the foods we eat, but emerging research suggests there may be a link between a low-glycemic diet (25 percent of energy from protein and 45 percent from low-glycemic –index carbohydrates) and an improvement in acne
 - Patients who notice a cause-effect relationship between eating certain foods and flare-ups should avoid those foods
 - Eat a well-balanced diet
 - Follow the treatment plan recommended by your dermatologist
- Rosacea, characterized by facial redness and swelling, is commonly triggered by alcohol, spicy foods or heated beverages
 - Keep a journal to track food and beverage triggers
 - Read food labels and proceed with caution when it comes to spices such as cayenne, red, black and white pepper, curry, chili powder, and salsa
- Eczema, which is commonly characterized by dry, red and itchy patches on the skin, may be aggravated by eggs, milk, peanuts, soy, wheat and fish
 - Keep a trigger journal as a reference for what foods or drinks may have caused a flare-up

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- Psoriasis, a serious medical condition affecting the immune system, is characterized by patches of raised, reddish skin covered by silvery-white scales and can be triggered by heavy drinking
 - Patients who drink should do so in moderation
 - Avoid alcohol if it is worsening symptoms
 - Avoid any radical diets that claim to “cure” psoriasis
 - Discuss any concerns with a dermatologist

For more information about nutrition and the skin, visit the American Academy of Dermatology’s Web site at www.aad.org.