

### BEAUTY FROM THE INSIDE OUT: IMPROVING YOUR DIET OR TAKING SUPPLEMENTS MAY LEAD TO YOUNGER-LOOKING SKIN

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#### OVERVIEW:

Eating healthier is a common recommendation for people looking to reduce their risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other medical concerns. Now a growing body of research is evaluating whether certain dietary changes can impact the skin by reducing the signs of aging and improving some skin conditions. Nutricosmetics – the use of nutrition or nutritional supplements for skin health and beauty – is popular abroad and may be the next frontier for improving skin health and beauty in the United States.

#### AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DERMATOLOGY EXPERT:

Board-certified dermatologist Patricia Farris, MD, FAAD, clinical assistant professor of dermatology, Tulane University School of Medicine, New Orleans.

#### NUTRICOSMETICS FOR BEAUTY

##### *Supplements*

- Taken daily, common nutricosmetic supplements include ingredients such as vitamins, peptides, marine proteins and carotenoids. However, nutricosmetic supplements are not reviewed or approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.
- Supplements are purported to offer a wide-range of benefits to the skin such as softening lines and wrinkles and improving elasticity and roughness. In addition, supplements have been studied for their effectiveness in improving difficult-to-treat skin problems such as melasma.
- Some cosmetic companies are extending their existing topical cosmeceutical product lines by offering beauty supplements and recommending that they be used together to potentially improve the skin's appearance.
- One recent study showed that in individuals taking a daily supplement containing collagen peptides there was a significant reduction in eye wrinkle depth.<sup>1</sup> Study participants also showed improvement in their skin's collagen and elastin after eight weeks of taking the supplements.

##### *Dietary Changes*

- Dr. Farris said diets high in vitamin C and linoleic acid, (which is found in certain types of oils), and low in fat and carbohydrates are associated with fewer wrinkles and age-related dryness and less skin thinning.<sup>2</sup>
- Reducing sugar intake may protect elastin and collagen molecules in the skin. Research has shown that a diet high in sugar can damage these molecules, leading to wrinkles and sagging skin.

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## **NUTRICOSMETICS FOR PHOTOAGING AND SUN PROTECTION**

- Photoaging – aging due to exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light – contributes significantly to the visible signs of aging, such as brown spots and deep wrinkles.
- While supplements and foods are being explored for sun protection, they should not be used as a replacement for more traditional sun protection methods.
- There is currently no scientific evidence that oral supplements alone can provide an adequate level of protection from the sun's damaging UV rays. Consumers can use these supplements and foods in combination with seeking shade, wearing sun-protective clothing and applying sunscreen.

### *Supplements and Foods*

- Antioxidants such as vitamins C and E, lycopene, green tea polyphenols, beta carotene, and cocoa flavanols have been shown to offer some protection from ultraviolet light-induced skin damage.<sup>3</sup> These antioxidants can be found in vegetables and fruits, tea and certain types of chocolate.
- Supplements containing polypodium leucotomos, an extract of a Central American fern plant, or the probiotic *Lactobacillus johnsonii* have also been shown to offer some sun protection.<sup>4,5</sup>
- Dr. Farris said supplements containing synergistic antioxidants have the potential to also reduce sun damage. A supplement containing a combination of beta carotene, lycopene, vitamins C and E, selenium and proanthocyanidins was shown to provide some protection against sunburn and damaging enzymes that break down collagen.

### *Dietary Changes*

- Research has been conducted to determine if diets high in vegetables, legumes, fish and olive oil and low in dairy and sugar products may protect sun-exposed skin from wrinkling.
- Dr. Farris explains that this research may show that diets high in antioxidants found in vegetables and olive oil may help protect the skin from oxidative stress caused by sun exposure. Oxidative stress causes damage to cell membranes, DNA and skin proteins like elastin and collagen.

## **NUTRITION AND SKIN CONDITIONS**

- Studies have shown diets full of high glycemic index foods, such as processed breads or snacks or sugary carbonated drinks, or high in dairy may contribute to acne flares. Dr. Farris said improving the diet of people with acne is now considered an essential component of effective acne treatment.
- Dr. Farris said research is being conducted on people with atopic dermatitis to determine if nutritional intervention with probiotics may treat or even prevent atopic dermatitis.
- Dr. Farris also said research shows that psoriasis can be improved by following a low-calorie diet.<sup>6</sup>

## **AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DERMATOLOGY EXPERT ADVICE:**

“Healthy eating habits appear to be a valuable tool to reduce the signs of skin aging as well as the management of certain skin conditions,” said Dr. Farris. “Many dermatologists are involved in the groundbreaking research exploring the benefits of nutricosmetics to the skin. While the science behind nutrition, supplementation and the skin is still evolving, research suggests a diet high in antioxidants and healthy fats and low in sugars, refined carbohydrates and bad fats may help the skin look younger. A board-certified dermatologist can answer questions about how nutrition and supplementation may play a role in your skin health or in managing a skin condition.”

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*Headquartered in Schaumburg, Ill., the American Academy of Dermatology (Academy), founded in 1938, is the largest, most influential, and most representative of all dermatologic associations. With a membership of more than 18,000 physicians worldwide, the Academy is committed to: advancing the diagnosis and medical, surgical and cosmetic treatment of the skin, hair and nails; advocating high standards in clinical practice, education, and research in dermatology; and supporting and enhancing patient care for a lifetime of healthier skin, hair and nails. For more information, contact the Academy at 1-888-462-DERM (3376) or [www.aad.org](http://www.aad.org). Follow the Academy on [Facebook](#) (American Academy of Dermatology), [Twitter](#) (@AADskin) and [YouTube](#) (Academy of Dermatology).*

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<sup>1</sup> Proksch E, et al. Oral intake of specific bioactive collagen peptides reduces skin wrinkles and increases dermal matrix synthesis. *Skin Pharmacol Physiol* 2014;27:113-119.

<sup>2</sup> Cosgrove, MC, et al. Dietary nutrient intake and skin aging appearance among middle-aged American women. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2007;86:1225-1231.

<sup>3</sup> Placzek M, et al. Ultraviolet B-induced DNA damage in human epidermis is modified by the antioxidants and ascorbic acid and d-alpha-tocopherol. *J Invest Dermatol* 2005;124:304-307.

<sup>4</sup> Gonzalez S, et al. Polypodium leucotmos extract: a nutraceutical with photoprotective properties. *Drugs Today* 2007;43(7):475-485.

<sup>5</sup> Guey A, Philippe D, Bastien P et al. Probiotics for photoprotection. *Dermato-endocrinology* 2013;1(5)275-279

<sup>6</sup> Gelfand JM and Abuabara K. Diet and weight loss as a treatment for psoriasis. *Arch Derm* 2010;146(5):544-546.