



Glowing Healthy Skin

• • • Your 'at a glance' guide to staying healthy for life By Quest Vitamins • • •

Skin maintains body structure and forms a physical barrier protecting the body from the external environment; it is also required for temperature control and the synthesis of vitamin D. Skin condition affects overall physical appearance dramatically, it is an inherent part of self-image. Poor diets and environmental allergies can play havoc with skin condition.

Skin

Skin has three layers: the epidermis ("overskin") or top layer, the dermis ("skin") or middle layer and the subcutis ("underskin") or bottom layer. The outer surface of the skin, the epidermis, is comprised of hard, flattened dead cells. Beneath this are living cells which are somewhat larger, and at the bottom layer, there are new cells growing and pushing upward to the surface.

The sebaceous glands are located in the dermis at the base of each hair follicle, they secrete an oily substance called sebum which waterproofs the hair and lubricates the skin. Collagen and elastin are the skin proteins responsible for elasticity, tone and texture. Glycosaminoglycans (GAG's) and proteoglycans hold water in the skin (these are very similar to mucus proteins) and are the true skin moisturizers.

Skin Conditions

Acne: Acne in puberty is the result of increased sensitivity to the hormone testosterone. Testosterone causes excessive sebum to be secreted from the sebaceous glands; skin cells rapidly divide and sometimes block the opening of hair follicles (pores). The resulting build up of sebum behind the blockage appears as spots. Bacteria can also build up behind blocked pores, causing inflammation. Women may experience moderate acne due to hormonal changes associated with pregnancy, menstrual cycles, menopause and starting/stopping birth control pills.

Eczema: Atopic dermatitis, also known as eczema, occurs when the skin is abnormally sensitive to allergens, causing the skin to become inflamed, flaky, itchy and susceptible to infection. The condition is common in infancy.

Psoriasis: Your body produces new cells in your lowest skin level and these skin cells gradually move up through the layers of your skin until they reach the outermost level, then they die and flake off, a process that takes around normally 21 to 28 days. In psoriasis this process is speeded up, so that it only takes 2- 6 days. As a result, dead skin cells build up rapidly on the surface of the skin causing red, flaky, crusty patches covered with silvery scales to appear on the surface. These patches are then shed easily. It can occur on any part of your body although it is most commonly found on the elbows, knees, lower back and the scalp. The condition is believed to result from an overactive immune response; white blood cells (T cells) act as if they were fighting an infection or healing a wound, leading to inflammation and the rapid growth of skin cells causing psoriatic plaques to form.

Key Nutrients For Healthy Skin:

- ✓ Evening Primrose Oil
- ✓ Fish Oil
- ✓ Vitamin C
- ✓ Vitamin A
- ✓ Riboflavin
- ✓ Niacin
- ✓ Folate
- ✓ Zinc
- ✓ Iron
- ✓ Probiotics

Beauty Is On The Inside

Skin condition is influenced by a number of factors besides external skin care regimes, including hormone activity, stress and diet. Research suggests that consuming sufficient healthy fat (found in oily fish, avocados, nuts and olive oil), plus fruit, vegetables and lean meat, will help promote perfect skin. For optimal skin condition, supplement with a

combination of essential fats with key micronutrients.

Youthful Skin

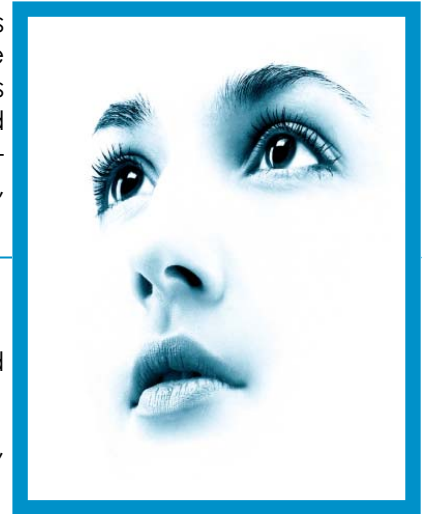
Free radical damage is one of the principal mechanisms of aging. Free radicals are highly reactive chemicals that can damage cells, leading to the degradation of proteins such as collagen. Free radicals are generated internally by the processes that

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maintain life and externally in the environment. Nature's antidote to free is antioxidants, which neutralise free radicals. The principal antioxidants are vitamins C and E, zinc and selenium, plant substances known as flavonoids and plant pigments known as carotenoids; all of these nutrients are found in high concentrations in avocados, vegetable oils, nuts and seeds, oysters, lean meat, apples, citrus fruit, green vegetables, berries, tomatoes, red grapes, prunes, tea and cocoa.



Feed Your Skin

Evening primrose oil is rich in the anti-inflammatory omega-6 fatty acid gamma linolenic acid (GLA).

Fish Oil is rich in the omega-3 fatty acid eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), which promotes a healthy inflammatory response.

Vitamin C is required for the synthesis of collagen, the major structural component of skin; it is also a crucial water-soluble anti-oxidant.

Vitamin A is required for normal cell differentiation (the specialisation of cells to perform specific functions) and as such is vital to skin health. Beta-carotene, the pigment that gives carrots their bright orange colour, is a pro-vitamin A carotenoid, meaning that when required it can be used to make vitamin A; beta-carotene is a safer way to supplement with vitamin A, it also acts as an antioxidant.

Riboflavin and niacin:

Riboflavin is critical for the generation of energy from carbohydrates, fats and proteins; the vitamin is also required for the normal use of other B-group vitamins and iron. In riboflavin deficiency a scaly skin inflammation (seborrheic dermatitis) can appear and dry skin patches at the corner of the mouth. As many as 200 enzymes (proteins which kick-start chemical reactions) require niacin, it mainly functions in the reactions that generate energy. In niacin deficiency a scaly, darkly pigmented rash can develop in areas exposed to sunlight.

Folate:

The synthesis of DNA is dependant on folate. As skin has a short life cycle its condition is dependant on healthy DNA replication.

Zinc is part of the powerful anti-oxidant enzyme superoxide dismutase, and is essential to skin condition.

Iron forms the haem part of haemoglobin in blood, which transports oxygen; deficiency is associated with anaemia and pale, lifeless complexions.

A word about probiotics

Probiotics show promise for reducing or preventing atopic eczema/dermatitis in children. Infants benefit when their mothers take probiotics during pregnancy and breast-feeding; direct supplementation of infants may reduce the incidence of atopic eczema by as much as half. This is thought to be because exposure to bacteria in infancy is necessary to develop a balanced immune response.

Healthy, glowing skin comes from inside.

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