

10 Foods That May Improve Your Appearance and YOUR WELLNESS

Get skin glowing and hair shining the natural way, while making your body more well.



1. Blood oranges, cherries, blueberries and Potassium (orange colored) foods.

Collagen is a natural protein in your skin and muscles that provides resiliency, shape and texture. Unfortunately, collagen production decreases with age- but you can fight back with dark fruit. "Blood oranges, cherries and blueberries are full of antioxidants, which decrease aging and disease by lowering inflammation. Antioxidants also increase collagen production and thicken the skin, making you look younger and healthier," says Julia Tatum Hunter, M.D., of Skin Fitness Plus in Beverly Hills. "Antioxidants also decrease [the severity of] rosacea." Blackberries, raspberries, plums, pomegranates, cranberries, Asian dragon fruit and kiwis also. **A recent Canadian study concluded that getting more potassium might help lower your weight and blood pressure.** Levels measured in study participants were proportional to their diet and weight. "That makes sense," says Blatner. "The richest sources of potassium are beans, vegetables, and fruit, so the person with high potassium levels is consuming a lot of these foods, which are low in calories and are the most filling." You should aim for 4,700 milligrams of potassium each day. Supplements may help you hit that target, but doctors don't recommend them for everyone. Try filling up on white beans (1 cup: 1,000 mg. potassium), winter squash (1 cup: 494 mg.), spinach (1 cup: 840 mg.), baked potato with skin (926 mg.), yogurt (1 cup: 600 mg.), halibut (4 ounces: 566 mg.), and orange juice (1 cup: 473 mg.).

2. Shellfish, sunflower seeds and sardines

These foods may not taste great together, but individually they offer a powerhouse of essential fatty acids. Steven Chang, M.D., staff physician for RightHealth.com, says fatty acids nourish the skin, help maintain skin integrity and keep skin cells performing optimally. "Essential fatty acids, a component of all cell membranes in the body, regulate the flow of nutrients, waste materials, and water in and out of cells-which keeps you looking young." Flax seeds, tuna, walnuts, canola oil, soybean oil and pumpkin seeds are more good sources of essential fatty acids. Foods or liquid supplements are better than powders, powders are better than pills, and pills are better than no supplements.

3. Dandelion, turnip and mustard greens

"Foods that keep our livers cleansed of toxins, heavy metals and fats make our whole body function more efficiently," says Dr. Hunter. "This makes us happier, which affects how we look. Plus, a healthy liver brightens our eyes and tightens our skin." She recommends dense green foods such as broccoli, spinach and arugula-as well as turnip, mustard and dandelion greens. Eating these slightly bitter greens has been shown to lessen your sweet tooth. Hunter warns: "Simple and refined sugars, high-glycemic carbohydrates, and refined, manufactured foods age us." Excess sugar has been linked to a process called glycation, in which sugar molecules bond to protein molecules, which has been linked to sagging, wrinkled skin.

4. Oregano, thyme and parsley

"If you have puffy bags under your eyes in the morning, you are almost certainly consuming much more salt than you need," says Doris Day, M.D., author of *Forget the Facelift: Turn Back the Clock with a Revolutionary Program for Ageless Skin* (Avery, 2005). "Another problem is alcohol: It dehydrates you and can make your skin sag. The worst combination is alcohol and salt, which causes puffy dark circles under your eyes." Dr. Day recommends reducing your sodium intake to eliminate bloating. Instead of salt, season your meals with herbs and spices such as oregano, thyme, rosemary, parsley and garlic.

5. Crunchy vegetables

Fresh raw veggies are as good for your grin as they are for your skin! Celery, carrots, string beans and cauliflower contain cellulose, which helps scrub stains from your teeth-giving you a whiter, brighter smile. "Both the cellulose and the [other] fiber in these foods act as abrasives that clean and remove bacteria from teeth," says Mickey Bernstein, M.D., president of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry. Crunchy veggies are especially effective for recent discolorations. If you've just consumed blueberries, coffee, mustard, red wine or cranberry juice, follow it up with fresh cucumber slices or an apple. Foods are better than powders, powders are better than pills, and pills are better than no supplements. Water in your glass is good, but water in your food can have serious slimming power. In a new *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* study, obese women ages 20 to 60 were told to either reduce their fat intake or increase their intake of water-rich foods, such as fruits and veggies. Although they ate more, women in the water-rich group chose foods that were more filling-yet had fewer calories-so they still lost 33 percent more weight in the first 6 months than the women in the reduced-fat group. Fill up on food that's high in H₂O. Some good choices in addition to fruits and veggies: broth-based, low-sodium soups; oatmeal and other whole grains; and beans.

6. Sea vegetables

"Polluted cells can't function at their optimum level. When our cells are functioning optimally, not only do we have more energy-we look and feel great," says nutritionist Carol Wasserman. "Sea vegetables are one of our richest sources of minerals and phytochemicals." These veggies help detoxify, rebuild and nourish all the cells in our body. Unhealthy foods, stress and environmental pollutants cause cells to age prematurely, potentially leading to thinning hair and premature wrinkles. "Sea vegetables reverse this process," says Wasserman. "For example, spirulina is a 'detox powerhouse.' Hijiki, kelp, arame, wakame, and dulse also work wonders." Foods and liquid

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7. Meat, cheese, lentils, and sprouts

It may take 10 pounds of milk to make a pound of cheese, but fortunately you don't need to eat that much dairy or protein to repair your cells. As you age, your hair and skin cells become damaged, making you appear older. The protein in meat, chicken, low-fat cheese, cottage cheese, and certain vegetables promotes cell growth and repair, which translates to younger-looking skin, fewer wrinkles, less hair loss and a glossy mane. To take a break from meat or dairy, try soybeans and lentils instead (they contain more protein than any other legume). The need for protein is over rated. We should not absorb protein, but should break down the protein to its' amino acids. Sprouts are rich in the amino acids we need and thus supply the needed factors. When you get a meat craving it is because you are craving amino acids. A small handful of sprouts will supply the amino acids you need. And the meat craving that is left is just addiction.

8. Egg yolks, organ meats

Dr. Chang says, "Vitamin A is especially important for skin repair, and decreased levels can lead to dry, flaky skin." Dr. Day adds that a lack of vitamin A may cause your skin to heal poorly and wrinkle easily. The main sources of this vitamin are foods from animals, such as liver, eggs and whole-milk dairy products. Some plants-carrots and broccoli, for example-supply beta-carotene, which your body converts to vitamin A as needed. Apricots, nectarines, plums and cantaloupe are more great sources of beta-carotene.

9. Almond or hemp "milk"

Almond milk is a nutritious dairy alternative because of its high levels of magnesium, potassium, manganese, copper, vitamin E, selenium and calcium. Licensed medical esthetician Tina Seitz says, "Hemp milk is a delicious, nutty-tasting non-dairy beverage that provides essential balanced nutrition. It's a fantastic alternative to soymilk or dairy, and has a natural well-balanced ratio of omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids to keep your mind sharp, your immune system strong and your skin glowing." Both almond and hemp milks are plant-based, and don't contain lactose. They offer high-quality protein that can give hair a radiant, healthy shine and helps keep skin soft.

10. Wild salmon with avocado and mango dressing

This is more than a delicious meal-it's an anti-aging feast! Stephen Sinatra, M.D., of the University of Connecticut School of Medicine says, "Wild Alaskan salmon has precious omega-3 essential fatty acids, which enhance blood flow. The pink/orange color of wild salmon is an anti-aging carotenoid called astaxanthin that protects cell membranes." Salmon also contains dimethylaminoethanol (DMAE), which improves facial muscle tone and reduces wrinkles. Add avocado for its antioxidant properties and mango (for vitamin E and anti-inflammatory carotenoids) and you'll be sitting pretty after dinner!

MOST IMPORTANT

Eat good sugars and good oils. Avoid bad sugars and bad oils.

Dextrose sugars are bad because they have a high glycemic index and go into fat very quickly while weaken the immune system the nerves and the hormone production. Dextrose sugars are white, sugar cane, sugar beet, corn sugar. Levulose or fructose (fruit sugar) as it is called makes less fat, more hormones and strengthens the immune system.

Cold processed plant oils are best. They contain unsaturated fatty acids which are carbon chains. They make the cell membranes of all cells. Thus the visible skin is made of fatty acids. Once a fatty acid is boiled or cooked the fatty acids become trans fatty acids and acrylamides are formed by cooking that cause cancer. Avoid any food boiled in oil. And avoid any trans fatty acid containing processed food.

Avoid nitrates especially in processed meats. Hot dogs, bologna, lunch meats, convenience meats, nitrate sausage and other processed meats are more of a cancer risk than anybody has suspected. The nitrates produce age acceleration and a host of other problems. Avoid at all costs.

Avoid smoking and exposure to smoke. This is an age accelerant. Also most synthetic drugs accelerate aging.

Avoid excess or disturbing stress. At age forty, life has given you your face. If you have been over stressed and over reactive your face will show the life.

WHAT ABOUT CHOCOLATE

Cocoa can lower blood pressure; reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, diabetes, and dementia; and possibly even prevent cancer. But the research isn't as delicious as it seems. The cocoa-bean products used in the studies are a far cry from the highly processed chocolate candy you find on the shelves of your local store. "Milk chocolate contains about 150 calories and 10 grams of fat per ounce," says Campbell. The key here is small doses. Dark chocolate, which retains more of the bean during processing, generally has slightly less fat and fewer calories than milk chocolate-plus, it's richer, so less goes a longer way.