



What You Should Know About Your Skin



While considered by some to be a superficial yearning, the fact is that the health of the skin is a strong indicator of the health of the mind and body.

The importance of the skin to one's overall physical, mental, and emotional health is often overlooked. It is seen simply as the covering of the vital organs and systems inside, and many people think its care is a luxury, rather than a necessity. This could not be further from the truth!

Caring for the skin is holistic care... mind, body, and spirit.



Physiologically, the skin is intimately connected to every other organ and system of the body – most notably, the brain/ central nervous system, digestion, and detoxification. On the emotional side, the skin is how we present ourselves to the world and is often how the world first perceives us. Its health, and our perception of its appearance, has the ability to deeply affect our self-image, our relationships, and how we show up in our world.

The skin cannot be divorced from the rest of the body. Just as our body requires a bio-individual approach to both primary and secondary food for true holistic nourishment, the skin does as well.

There are
five key
integrative
ingredients
for healthy,
glowing skin:



1 Physically nourish inside and out.

The skin is primarily comprised of different proteins that are built from the inside, with whatever nutrients are available. Vitamins such as A, C, E, K, and the B vitamins (primarily biotin and niacinamide) are key building blocks, in addition to the full spectrum of amino acids. Your diet should include vitamin- and antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables, plus complete proteins, such as pastured meats and eggs. If you don't eat meat, be sure to combine your plant proteins to ensure you're getting all your amino acids, as most of them are not stand-alone complete proteins. Topically, choose herbal skincare products, preferably made from whole plant herbal preparations.

2 Hydrate.

Did you know that the skin only receives about 10% of the water you consume internally? It's true! The hydration you intake first goes to hydrate your internal vital organs, and by the time it reaches the skin, it's like two-day-old leftovers. So while it is necessary to hydrate from the inside, it is also extremely important to hydrate on the outside using topical products that contain humectant ingredients that bring moisture into the skin, like aloe vera gel and vegetable glycerine. Herbal steams, hydrosols, and compresses are also a great way to hydrate.



3 Protect and seal in moisture with healthy fats.

Water is important, but it is only useful if it stays in the cells, whether that's the cells as they are forming inside the body or the cells in the epidermis. Water loss, whether trans-cellular or trans-epidermal, happens when there are not enough lipids present in the cell membranes or on the surface of the skin to prevent the water from seeping out, or evaporating. Therefore, we must get enough lipids in our diets and topical skincare regimens to seal in moisture and ensure healthy function. Eat a diet rich in foods that contain essential fatty acids, such as nuts and seeds; dark leafy greens; small fatty fish, like sardines, anchovies, and wild-caught salmon; and pastured beef, chicken, and eggs. If you're supplementing, be sure you're getting the correct ratio of DHA to EPA. Topically, choose products that contain fixed oils – lipids cold-pressed from the nuts or seeds of plants, such as olive oil, argan oil, jojoba oil, or shea butter.

4 Cut the toxic chemicals.

Just as processed food that contains health-harming synthetic chemicals should be avoided, the same is true for mass-produced synthetic skincare products. Most conventional skincare products found at drugstores, department stores, and even many spas contain ingredients that are not compatible with the human body, are known to cause irritant and allergic reactions on the outside, and contribute to body burden on the inside. Choose products that are made with as many recognizable plant ingredients as possible and contain no synthetic fragrances. If the product contains preservatives, look to see if it is certified organic or has certifications by organizations such as MadeSafe, the EWG, Natrue, ECOCERT, or Cosmos.

5 Adopt skin-loving practices.

We tend to be rough with our skin when it shows us something we don't like, even though it's just doing its job and letting us know that something is out of balance on the inside. Instead of jumping to scrub, zap, burn, or poke blemishes, visible capillaries, or dark spots, show love and gratitude to your skin for being such a loyal messenger. Apply your products gently and lovingly, and be sure to smile at your reflection whenever you catch a glimpse in a mirror or window.

DIY Facial Smoothie Mask



Ingredients:

- 2 cups baby spinach (rich in A vitamins and essential fatty acids)
- 1 cup diced pineapple (contains bromelain, an enzyme that promotes gentle exfoliation)
- 1 kiwi (rich in vitamins C and E)
- 1 avocado (naturally moisturizing with healthy fats and rich with carotenoid antioxidants)
- Juice from half a lemon (vitamin C and citric acid)
- 1 cup spring or filtered water (hydrating and may contain minerals depending on the source)
- 1 tablespoon mineral-rich clay (Bentonite, Rhassoul, French green, or white kaolin. Use one clay or a combination of clays – but use kaolin if you have drier or more sensitive skin)

Instructions:

- Add all ingredients except clay into a high-speed blender. Set aside 2 tablespoons of smoothie in a small prep bowl, and pour the rest into a glass or mason jar.
- Add clay to the prep bowl, little by little, until you get an opaque, paste-like consistency.
- Apply it to the entire face and neck, avoiding the eye area and lips.
- Leave it on for 15 minutes, and drink the remaining smoothie while the mask sets.
- Remove gently with a soft cloth and warm water.
- Tone and apply moisturizer.