

# Miracle FOODS

When it comes to taking care of your skin, the best treatment is from the inside out

**N**obody wants to look old, but not everybody wants to take drastic measures to fight the aging process. Luckily, you don't have to! Aging occurs when skin cells die and lose elasticity. The market is inundated with wrinkle creams, but it's actually what you feed your skin on the inside that counts. J.Lo says it best: "If you rush to try the latest skin-smoothing cream, it's time you got just as excited about the supermarket." Nutritionist Matt Mahowald and dermatologist Dr. Susan Evans tell OK! about the nutrients that'll keep your skin looking young and vibrant.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Honey is an anti-inflammatory.
- Olive oil makes a great night cream to restore your skin's moisture.
- Tomatoes have lycopene, which helps reduce the risk of cancer.
- Garlic is a natural antibiotic. It's really good for clearing the blood of bacteria.
- Prolonged use of caffeine will induce wrinkles, as it forces water out of your body.
- Titanium and zinc are the two key components you want in your sunscreen to help block you from the sun.

## ● ALWAYS IMPORTANT ANTIOXIDANTS

You hear this term all the time, but what exactly do antioxidants do? In short, they reduce the rate of damage to cells. And Mahowald explains that this is important to the skin — the largest organ of our bodies — because antioxidants ensure that the body's skin collagen and elastic tissue do not lose their firmness.

### Food for thought:

Blueberries, blackberries, green tea, raspberries and spinach.

## ● GET YOUR FIBER

It is important that you have enough fiber in your diet, according to Dr. Evans. It will help your body eliminate a lot of excess fat and cholesterol that ends up causing problems with your skin, such as clogging up your pores and contributing to things like varicose veins and weakness of the blood vessels.

### Food for thought:

Leafy vegetables, whole-grain oats and cereals.

## PREVENTION

It's never too early or too late to start taking care of your skin. In most cases, you can avoid having to get a face-lift.

## THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW:

- Fix your diet
- Quit smoking
- Wear sunscreen

## ● FAT ISN'T ALWAYS BAD

People tend to stay away from dietary fats, but it's important to remember there is such a thing as good fat, also known as essential fatty acids. Fatty acids are great because they serve as an anti-inflammatory, strengthen the immune system (which in turn protects your skin) and break down fat in your skin that would normally clog up your pores. Dr.



## THE MAGIC FORMULA OF WATER

**Skin is the largest organ of the body, and 75 percent of a woman's total body volume is water. So drink up! Mahowald's hydration rule is half an ounce of water per pound of body weight if you exercise less than five hours a week. (So if you weigh 125 pounds, you should be drinking about 63 ounces of water a day — about eight glasses) If you exercise more than five hours a week, you should be drinking one ounce per pound of body weight. (So if you weigh 125 pounds, you should drink 125 ounces — almost a gallon!)**



Evans explains that if the pores are open they tend to shrink, and small pores essentially give you beautiful skin. When you have very porous skin it takes away from the tone of the face, which will make you look older.

Pamela Anderson says when it comes to her glow, she's not on any treatment. "But I do eat a lot of avocados," she claims.

**Food for thought:** Avocados, olive oil, almonds, salmon, cod and halibut.

## ● DON'T FORGET YOUR VITAMINS

The most vital vitamins for your skin are A (also known as beta-carotene), C, D and E. These vitamins are huge components in fighting off infection and

regulating the immune system so that it can eliminate toxins from the body (and skin). Some of these have even been proven to prevent cancer. The almighty vitamin E neutralizes free radicals (which are unstable molecules that destruct healthy molecules in order to survive), and that's a huge component of aging.

**Food for thought:** Vitamin A: carrots, sweet potatoes, mangos; vitamin C: oranges, strawberries, peppers; vitamin D: eggs, milk, salmon; vitamin E: soy, sunflower seeds, whole grains. **OK!**



## SUPPLEMENTS

If you don't feel like you have enough of these ingredients in your daily diet, you can find almost any vitamin as a supplement in your local natural-food store. Other than the typical vitamins (A, C, D and E), Dr. Evans recommends alpha lipoic acid, a very potent antioxidant. It gives you a lot of bang for your buck and helps fight off any of the damage the sun could be doing. It also nourishes your skin and helps the skin cells stay alive longer. 500 mg a day is good, and there usually aren't any side effects. Selenium is another supplement that's really good for maintaining smooth skin with good elasticity.



A healthy diet helps give Denise Richards her natural glow.

**"Eating a balance of protein and fiber keeps me going"**

RICHARDS: DAN MACMEDAN/CONTOURPHOTOS; WATER: ASTRID STAWARZ; ALL OTHER PHOTOS: JULIAN PONS (3)