

Healthy Diet Helps Mask the Aging Process

No one wants to look older than his or her age. But, if your skin is full of premature sags and wrinkles, you can't avoid it.

Although you may not think of your skin as an organ, it is actually the largest organ in your body and one of the most critical. Your skin has the extremely critical role of providing a barrier against a very hostile external environment that includes bacteria, fungi, and the never-ending oxidation caused by the sun. With new skin cells forming all the time, your skin is even more sensitive than other organs to changes in your body.

Your skin's visual appearance gives you a window into the internal state of your body. Let's face it. You know when you look good, usually it's when you're feeling strong and healthy. When your skin has a rosy glow, this means you've got good blood circulation within the skin and probably through the rest of your body. On the other hand, you often know you're getting sick when you see pallor to your skin, indicative of poor blood flow. You can bet that the rest of your body is not too far behind.

One unmistakable sign of aging is the formation of wrinkles. Scientifically speaking, wrinkles are caused by the cross-linking of collagen fibers in the skin, and this cross-linking can be accelerated by inflammation or by constant exposure to the sun. The most effective way to reduce wrinkle formation (other than staying out of the sun completely) is to reduce arachidonic acid levels in the skin, thus decreasing the potential for the production of pro-inflammatory "bad" eicosanoids.

An even more powerful approach to preventing wrinkles is to increase the levels of “good” eicosanoids in your body because of their powerful anti-inflammatory actions. These “good” eicosanoids will do far more to reduce the inflammatory process that leads to wrinkles than all the fruit acids and vitamin E creams you can possibly rub on your skin. This is because “good” eicosanoids are very powerful anti-inflammatory agents. With improved blood flow and decreased inflammation, your skin will look years younger.

Skin diseases, such as eczema and psoriasis, often are a result of excessive levels of “bad” eicosanoids. While neither eczema nor psoriasis is life threatening, both are cause for concern because they indicate a significant inflammatory process occurring in the skin. Various studies have indicated that high-dose fish oil, a natural anti-inflammatory, can contribute to some improvement in psoriasis. Other inflammatory skin conditions, such as eczema, also respond well to high-dose fish oil.

Another key to improving your skin’s appearance is to increase your production of the key structural proteins of the skin – collagen and elastin – as you age. These structural proteins give your skin its firmness and elasticity. As the production of collagen and elastin decreases with age, your skin starts to droop and sag. In order to keep collagen and elastin at increased levels, you need to increase blood flow to your skin, since that stimulates the enzymes that produce these structural proteins. Using techniques such as laser resurfacing, dermabrasion, and chemical peels, plastic surgeons not only remove cross-linked proteins from the top layer of skin, but also stimulate the blood flow to your skin. This increased blood flow enhances the new production of both collagen and elastin, but unfortunately with significant increase in inflammation and pain in the process.

Since beautiful skin ultimately begins with what you eat, the Zone Diet and OmegaRx EPA/DHA Concentrates may represent the

best cosmetic product you can use.

Dr. Barry Sears is a leader in the field of dietary control of hormonal response. A former research scientist at the Boston University School of Medicine and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dr. Sears has dedicated his efforts over the past 25 years to the study of lipids and their inflammatory role in the development of chronic disease.

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