

Skin Health – Quick Guide to Healthy Skin

Your skin is the first thing people see when they look at you. Taking care of your skin health is more important than you might think. You can apply as many topical agents to your skin as you want, but healthy skin comes from the inside out.

Your skin is the largest organ in your body by size and is your body's protective layer, as it protects your internal structures from the outside world. Skin has various functions and some of the many functions include: it holds in bodily fluids, regulates body temperature, protects against pathogens, keeps you hydrated and aids in the elimination of toxins. Skin is exposed to the external environment on a daily basis, which leaves it open to injury, infection and inflammation, all of which can result in scarring, contracture formation, disfigurement or amputation if not properly managed.

There are various skin conditions out there with the main ones including; acne, eczema/dermatitis, psoriasis and rosacea all of which can impact mentally on a person with a higher risk of developing low self-esteem, depression, diminished social life and problems at work.

How can Skin Health be compromised?

There are various factors which can contribute to the development of skin conditions which may include:

- Genetics
- Digestive factors – poor digestion, bowel toxaemia, poor liver function, intestinal bacteria and fungi and food allergies
- Stress
- Viral infections and bacterial infections
- Medications
- Hormones
- Poor diet and nutritional deficiencies
- Personal hygiene (poor or excessive)
- Inflammation
- Under-functioning lymphatic system

Essential Nutrients for Skin

- **Essential Fatty Acids:** essential for health and growth of skin and hair. Maintains skin elasticity. Good for inflammation and wound healing.
- **Zinc:** essential for growth and development and important for repairing damaged cells.
- **Vitamin E:** essential for membrane integrity and a powerful antioxidant.

Healthy Skin Tips

1. Eat well

Choose foods that are healthy and loaded with lots of essential nutrients will promote good skin health. A wholefoods approach is recommended which includes; quality protein sources both animal and vegetarian, lots of fresh vegetables and fruits, complex carbohydrates and healthy fats. Your natural health practitioner will be able to provide you with more information on how to make the necessary changes.

2. Be active

Partake in regular exercise to increase the blood flow around the body and to your skin. This aids the lymphatic system allowing toxins to be removed through sweat.

3. Tackle stress

Stress affects the whole body including the skin and compromises many systems in the body such as; the digestive system and immune system. Stress creates inflammation, throws out our hormonal balance and impairs how quickly the body can heal itself. All of these factors have been linked to poor skin quality, therefore it is essential that you find ways to manage your stress. Yoga, meditation, Pilates, breathing exercises, massage, gym, sports, counselling and social activities may assist.

4. Brush your skin

Dry skin brushing can be an effective way to stimulate the lymphatic system, which is responsible for aiding in the removal of wastes and toxins from the body. Skin brushing will remove dead skin cells, which will unclog pores and make it easier for wastes and toxins to be eliminated. Dry skin brushing is best done before a morning shower as if done too close to bed time it may be difficult to fall asleep as skin brushing can have an energising effect on the body.

5. Choose good skin care products

Your skin naturally contains skin microbes that protect the health of your skin. Skin microbes can be affected by the products we add to our skin and by washing skin too frequently, leaving our skin open to pathogens that can cause infections. Look for pH balanced products that are free of chemicals that will not strip your skin of its natural oils. Try not to wash your face with a face wash more than twice daily as this can affect the natural production of oils in your skin.

6. Supplement support

Supplements can be used to aid the recovery of skin or if your diet is deficient in an essential nutrient. Speak with your natural health practitioner who will be able to identify any nutritional deficiencies and recommend supplements to provide support.

If you suffer from skin conditions such as; dermatitis/eczema, psoriasis or rosacea, there are specific nutritional considerations that need to be considered in terms of allergy testing, foods, nutrients and herbs. Customised nutritional plans comprising of a specific food plan with the support of nutrient/herbal supplements can be very effective in the management of sinusitis and hayfever. If you require support please visit www.good4younutrition.com.au