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FOOD & WINE

Mind/Body/Soul

By Maryann Hammers



BEAUTIFUL SKIN FROM WITHIN

How to eat your way to a wonderful complexion.

As a board-certified plastic surgeon specializing in cosmetic procedures, Dr. Leilie Javan performs face-lifts, eyelid lifts, and brow lifts. She zaps lines and plumps wrinkles with lasers, Botox, and fillers; and she prescribes pharmaceutical-grade products and potions. So it may come as a surprise when she reveals her secret to youthful, glowing skin: “Between you and me, the real key is living a happy, healthy life with enough rest and good nutrition.” Javan, who has offices in Westlake Village and Thousand Oaks, adds, “If your diet is missing certain nutrients, your skin will look dry, sallow, and old.”

Scientists studying the link between diet, health, and beauty are increasingly discovering that many nutrients that benefit our heart and other organs also protect our body’s largest organ—the skin. So, before you drop hundreds of dollars at the cosmetics counter, stroll the supermarket aisles and add these products to your grocery cart:

FLAXSEED is well known for its heart-healthy Omega-3 fatty acids. But did you know that Omega-3s also keep your skin healthy? Research published in the *British Journal of Nutrition* shows that flaxseed oil protects skin from reddening, roughness, and scaling while helping it stay hydrated. Sprinkle ground flaxseed on cereal or yogurt, or add to soups and sauces. Flax can also be used as a healthful substitute for eggs or oils in baked goods, according to the makers of Omega Golden Flax. One tablespoon of milled flax and three tablespoons of water equals one egg; three tablespoons of flax replaces one tablespoon of butter or oil. (For recipes and flax tips, go to www.flaxusa.com.)

POMEGRANATES have been revered for their healing properties since ancient times. The exotic super-fruit is loaded with antioxidants, such as ellagic acid, which boasts anti-aging, sun-protective, and collagen-boosting properties.

GREEN, LEAFY VEGETABLES AND SPINACH contain lutein and beta-carotene. Lutein protects the skin from sun damage while keeping it hydrated and also increases elasticity. Beta-carotene converts to vitamin A, which helps reduce fine lines and minimizes pores.

TOMATO SAUCE/PASTE is rich in lycopene, which gives tomatoes their bright red pigment and helps neutralize UV light’s damaging effects. Studies from the Universities of Newcastle and Manchester in the United Kingdom show that people who ate about five tablespoons of tomato paste daily had one-third more protection from sunburn after being exposed to ultraviolet light, and their skin had greater elasticity. Cooked tomatoes (sauce and paste) have the greatest concentrated lycopene content.

DARK CHOCOLATE is chock-full of flavanols, which keep skin soft, smooth, strong, and hydrated. In a study published in the *Journal of Nutrition*, researchers found that women who consumed half a cup of cocoa daily (equivalent to 3.5 ounces of dark chocolate) for 12 weeks had moister, smoother skin with less scaling and more resilience to sun damage. To reap the health benefits, choose dark (not milk) chocolate with the highest possible cacao content. So indulge in an occasional treat, but be prudent: Dark chocolate is still loaded with fat and sugar.

GREEN TEA AND BERRIES are Javan’s favorite food combo for gorgeous skin, thanks to their high antioxidant content. “Fresh-brewed green tea, as well as strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries, have anti-inflammatory properties,” she says. “They protect the skin from sun exposure and reduce the aging effect.”

From Plate to Product

THE SAME NUTRIENTS THAT DO WONDERS WHEN INCORPORATED INTO YOUR DIET ALSO DO MAGIC WHEN APPLIED TO THE SKIN.



THE BODY DELI'S new antioxidant-rich, handmade Blueberry Fusion Resurfacing Facial Wash (\$38) is made with pure—yet potent—botanical ingredients, such as fruit acids, blueberry puree, and acai berry puree to wash away sun damaged and rough skin. *Available at www.thebodydeli.com.*

MURAD (the skincare line created by renowned dermatologist Dr. Howard Murad) has packed the revitalizing goodness of pomegranates into an exfoliating mask (\$23), lightly scented cleanser (\$26), and shimmery lip protector (\$17). *Available at local spas, salons, and beauty supply stores; or at www.murad.com.*

Sugar is bad for your skin if you eat it. But Sugar Scrubs (\$5), made by **LUSH** with fair trade sugar, are sweet-scented balls that exfoliate dead cells and stimulate circulation, leaving you soft, bright, and glowing. *Available at Lush, 613 Paseo Nuevo, Santa Barbara, 805-957-0099 or www.lushusa.com.*



Pumpkin is loaded with beta-carotene, which is just as good on your skin as in your pie. **ZIA NATURAL SKINCARE'S** Pumpkin Exfoliating Mask (from \$6), made with pumpkin puree, improves skin texture and helps correct skin damage while soothing and smoothing. *Available at Whole Foods Markets and www.zianatural.com.* ■



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