

Glow FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Discover the secrets of gorgeous skin. Clue: you'll find it in the food store and your kitchen rather than as a cream in a jar with pretty packaging.



Glow from the inside out

In an age where everything seems to be about looking good, not feeling confident about the skin you're in (on every level) can have a really negative impact on how you experience your life. It IS possible to have an enormous impact on the way your skin looks and feels by making some changes to the way you eat - and I don't mean overly restricting the foods you love or going on a juice cleanse.

A word of truth...

There is no miracle potion you can buy to put on your skin that can achieve what a good diet can. I wish I could tell you otherwise. Of course, there are products that can shift the dead skin cells, which lets the world see your beauty. But if your body isn't happy, your skin will be sending messages to the world that that's the case.

Whether it's hormonal acne (time-of-the-month spots or that hideous peri-menopause thought-I-was-past-all-of-that acne) or inflamed skin, like eczema or psoriasis, I want you to know that the answer lies in the supermarket and health food store rather than the pharmacy or beauty department. In this little book, I'd like to highlight some of the common causes of conditions I see in clinic and some typical solutions. Nothing beats a personalised consultation to get the results you are looking for - especially if you've been struggling for a while. If you know you need a real breakthrough in this area, we should definitely talk. I warmly invite you to get in touch - email, message on social media, visit the website...

Whatever works for you.

Ready to start?



Acne

Acne is a very common problem you tend to think of as only affecting children going through puberty. For many people, the condition does resolve itself by the time they get to their 20s, while for others, it simply doesn't. And many women are alarmed by a return of hormonal acne in their 40s.

The main symptoms of acne are greasy skin and spots that might range from whiteheads to painful red papules and pustules filled with puss.

There are four main causes: increased turnover of skin cells, excess sebum production (one big trigger is hormone imbalance), bacteria or an inflammatory response. Dietary approaches are varied, because it very much depends on your personal triggers.

Though protocols vary, they might include looking at how well your body detoxifies toxins and hormones, rebalancing hormones, digestive health, avoiding grains or dairy, and addressing any nutrient deficiencies.

Rosacea

This is a condition that appears as red patches on the nose, cheeks, chin or forehead. It looks a bit like acne and can be very painful. The condition can come and go in the early stages, but if not dealt with, it can result in more permanent and visible blood vessel damage (think bulbous noses).

No one really understands what causes it, although there are links to increased blood flow to the skin (you're more likely to have rosacea if you're fair-skinned and blush easily), more inflammatory proteins in the skin, and high levels of free radicals among others.

Common nutritional approaches might include tackling those things that make you flush more. This could be reducing environmental triggers, identifying food intolerances or other trigger foods (foods high in histamine can be a problem), balancing hormones and lifestyle strategies to manage stress.

Psoriasis

People with psoriasis have skin cells that turn over much quicker than those of regular folk. This leads to an accumulation of skin cells on the surface of the skin; a psoriatic plaque that appears as raised patches covered with silvery scales. It can look quite angry and red due to an increase in blood vessels needed to support the rise in the number and production of cells.

Scientists used to think psoriasis was simply a skin condition, but now we know that its roots lie in the immune system. It's an autoimmune condition and is often seen alongside digestive problems thanks to links with increased intestinal permeability (aka 'leaky gut').

Autoimmune conditions can be quite complex to unravel, but you may get some relief by going gluten-free and avoiding vegetables from the nightshade family, like potatoes, tomatoes, aubergines, peppers, and chillies and eating plenty of anti-inflammatory omega-3 foods like oily fish, flax and chia seeds.

Eczema

Healthy skin is moisturised by fats and oils and plumped up with adequate water levels. In eczema sufferers, the skin fails to produce the necessary amounts of fats and oils, and it is less able to retain water. As a result, the body's protective layer isn't as good as it could be. You might notice itchy patches on the hands, elbows, and in the "bending" areas of the body, such as the inside of the elbows and back of the knees or the neck. But eczema can appear anywhere, including the armpits, chest and eyelids.

Eczema is often a sign of a 'leaky gut', a condition where undigested foods and bacteria end up passing through the gut lining into the bloodstream. These toxic substances result in inflammation. One way to deal with this is to remove triggers that make inflammation worse - such as gluten, sugar and dairy - from your diet.

Helpful nutrients for skin health

Vitamin A

Vitamin A helps control the rate of keratin your skin produces, aka the shedding of skin. Vital for skin maintenance and repair, a lack of vitamin A can result in a dull, flaky complexion. Foods to include: liver, eggs, sweet potato, carrots, butternut squash, spinach, kale, spring greens, turnip greens, romaine lettuce.

Vitamin B

B vitamins are important for cell reproduction, and they're super important as skin - along with hair and nails - is constantly being renewed. If you're deficient, you might experience dry, grey-looking skin, acne, wrinkles and hair loss. There are a number of different B vitamins, and each contributes something slightly different when it comes to skin health. Sources of B vitamins include meat and poultry, fish, beef, kidneys and liver, eggs, dairy, sunflower seeds, dried beans, peas, lentils, sesame seeds, asparagus, artichokes, avocados, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, kelp, fortified cereals, mushrooms, nuts, peas, spinach, sweet potatoes, watercress, Marmite, popcorn.

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is key for collagen production without which skin can sag and look dull. Vitamins C and E regenerate each other, so combining both these foods in a meal and snack is a gift that keeps on giving. Foods to include: blackcurrants, red peppers, kale, collard leaves, broccoli, kiwis, oranges, courgettes, cauliflower and spinach, citrus fruit.



Helpful nutrients for skin health

Calcium

Dry, itchy skin? Could be a calcium shortage, especially if this is accompanied by premature wrinkles. Calcium is the controller in a number of processes in the body, including how quickly skin cells divide, regulating lipids (fats) in the skin that maintain its integrity. Find calcium in foods like milk, cheese and other dairy products, fish where you eat the bones, sardines and pilchards, soya beans, tofu, sesame seeds and tahini, green leafy vegetables like broccoli, cabbage and okra.

Vitamin D

Skin cells produce a chemical that is converted into vitamin D in sunlight. It's important for many functions in the body, including immunity, blood sugar balance and bone health. Vitamin D also regulates growth and maturation of skin cells. It's impossible to get enough vitamin D from food alone, but do try to include more sardines, salmon, tuna, swordfish, eggs, orange juice, and fortified margarine, fortified cereals. And don't forget a daily dose of getting out into the sun! It's your best supplier of the 'sunshine vitamin'.

Vitamin E

Like vitamins A and C, vitamin E helps limit the damage done to collagen and elastin fibres by free radicals - the very things that accelerate skin ageing. Get more by eating sunflower seeds, almonds, spinach, Swiss chard, papaya, mustard greens, asparagus, peppers, Brazil nuts, fresh tuna, some meats including pork, beef, turkey and chicken, cottage cheese, eggs, brown rice, sunflower seeds, spinach, oats, mushrooms.



Helpful nutrients for skin health

Copper

Copper works with both vitamin C and zinc on creating the support structure for the skin. The balance of zinc and copper in the body is especially important as high levels in one can decrease absorption of the other. Good sources of copper are organ meats like liver, oysters, shitake mushrooms, nuts and seeds, leafy greens and dark chocolate.

Selenium

Selenium is a potent antioxidant that helps protect against free radical damage and is considered to play a role in skin cancer prevention. It additionally helps eliminate toxins from the skin. Brazil nuts are one of the best sources but also choose tuna, pork, beef, turkey and chicken.

Zinc

Zinc has a well-researched role in wound healing. People who suffer from eczema, acne or rosacea are often low in zinc. A lack of zinc can result in poor skin healing, eczema and rashes. Foods to include: venison, fish, ginger root, lamb, lean beef, turkey, green vegetables, oats, nuts, sesame seeds, pumpkin seeds, yoghurt, scallops.

Essential fatty acids

Essential fats are the building blocks of healthy cell membranes. Omega-3 is especially important and has a very calming effect on the body, which is important for inflammatory conditions like acne and eczema. A lack of essential fats causes cells to dry out too quickly, resulting in dry skin. The body can't make these fats, you have to eat them. Choose oily fish (salmon, sardines, halibut, scallops), flaxseed, walnuts, soya beans, tofu.

