



Nutrients (Foods) that may benefit your Skin:



The skin is the largest organ in the body. Any foods or nutrients that benefit other organs, like the heart and kidneys, will benefit the skin as well.

Here are examples of nutrients in products, where to find them in foods, and their effectiveness:

- **Vitamin C** (fruits and vegetables) improves wound healing. As the most common antioxidant found in the skin, it prevents free radicals from becoming cancerous or accelerating the aging process. In skincare products, vitamin C is unstable.
- **Vitamin A** (milk, egg yolks, and liver, butter, and fish oils) maintains the outer layer of skin. Retinol, retinyl palmitate, retinal and retinoic acid in creams can reduce wrinkles but if present in high quantities, it could irritate the skin and cause peeling. If not in high enough quantities, it may not result in any improvements.
- **Beta-carotene** (yellow, orange, and green vegetables), has anti-aging properties in foods, not been shown to be active in skincare products.
- **Vitamin E** (vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, whole wheat flour, soy, some meats and dairy products, avocado) is an antioxidant. In skincare products, it reduces damage from sun.
- **Flavonoids** (grape seeds, green tea, colourful fruits and vegetables, chocolates) are potent antioxidants. Polyphenols, the flavonoid from green tea, may be absorbed from the skin.
- **Alpha hydroxy acids** (AHA's) (oranges, lemons) dissolve dead skin cells but may be irritating. BHA is less irritating - work with a dermatologist.
- **Protein** amino acids (milk, yogurt, cheese, meat, fish, chicken, eggs, beans, soy, and nuts) help skin maintain elasticity. Most consumers do not know that amino acids are the building blocks of protein, which is abundant in foods.
- **Vitamin B12** (milk, dairy products, meat, fish, chicken, eggs) carries nutrients to the skin.
- **Potassium** (milk, yogurt, fruits, vegetables, beans) keeps skin hydrated.
- **Selenium** (meats, fish, shellfish, Brazil nuts, wheat germ, garlic, eggs) helps protect the body from skin cancer caused by the sun and preserves tissue elasticity. It also slows down aging and hardening of tissues associated with oxidation. In products, selenium protects animals from UV damage in studies.
- **Omega 3-fatty acids** (soy, flaxseed, fish, and walnuts) keep skin vibrant and healthy looking, and protect against sun damage. Average levels per 3 oz (100 g) serving: mackerel 2.5 g; salmon 1.8 g; herring 1.7 g; trout 1.6 g; tuna 1.6 g; sardines (canned, drained) 1.1 g.
- **Water** (milk, juice, fruits, vegetables, tea, and coffee) keeps skin hydrated and soft; minimizes under-eye circles.

Nutrients may or may not be absorbed from the skin. It is still best to include these foods in your diet as nutrients are better absorbed from the gut than through the skin. If you truly believe skin products containing the above nutrients improve your skin and are worth the cost, enjoy them. More expensive creams certainly have a better feel.

Exercise is encouraged as well to help increase blood flow to the skin and give you that healthy glow. The biggest culprits are the sun, smoking, poor eating habits, pollution, stress and genetics. For the best skin, reduce damaging environmental causes, eat well and stay active.

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