

ACNE BEYOND SKIN DEEP

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The skin is the largest organ system in the human body. Our skin covers and protects our bones, organs and cells, regulates body temperature and is responsible for production of Vitamin D and it performs many other functions as well.

The skin does not act as a single organ system, but is tied into many processes that occur in the body. While these are facts that you may already know, what you may not know is that the skin and the condition of it is a reflection of what is going on inside our bodies. Specifically in our “gut.” Yes, the inside of your intestines is much like the skin on your face, turned inside out. Truth be told, most skin conditions, including acne, eczema, psoriasis and dermatitis all have their origins in the gut.

Keeping your skin healthy has more to do with what you eat than you may think. Vitamins A and D are crucial for healthy skin. Rough, dry, and prematurely aged skin is a sure sign of Vitamin A deficiency.

Studies show that skin conditions are easily treated with the addition of Cod Liver Oil – See? Grandma was right after all!!! Cod liver oil contains both Vitamin A and D.

FACT: Vitamin A can also be applied topically to the skin and will help clear up scars and help wounds heal faster!!

Minerals and the skin.

Magnesium is one of the many minerals that are crucial to skin health. Magnesium deficiency causes people to become prone to allergies including eczema. Eating sugar and refined carbohydrates deplete the body of magnesium. In order to metabolize just one molecule of glucose (sugar), we need at least 28 molecules of magnesium. Just imagine how many molecules of glucose you are eating per day!!! Nuts, whole grains, bone broths, and unrefined salt (i.e. sea salt) are our best sources of magnesium. Other minerals that are necessary for skin health are Zinc, Iron and Selenium. Zinc deficiency is directly associated with acne because zinc helps to control the production of oil in the skin.

Red meat (preferably grass-fed), liver, and seafood are our best sources of these vital minerals.

Proteins and the skin.

Healthy skin depends on complete protein sources from animal products. Often times the detrimental effects of a complete vegetarian diet first show up as unhealthy looking skin. Proteins that are especially important for

the skin are the sulfur-containing amino acids cysteine and methionine. Methionine is an essential amino acid that your body cannot make. The adequate intake of both of these amino acids is important for the health of connective tissue, joints, hair, skin, and nails. The best sources of these are meat, (grass-fed of course) pork, and eggs.

Fats and the skin.

When talking about fats it’s always interesting how people dismiss this vital nutrient as unimportant. We live in such a “fat-phobic” society that fats are always labeled as the bad guy; when in reality nothing could be further from the truth. Fats are essential for good skin and for good overall health, and we are NOT just talking about fish oil here.

Understand that it’s the TYPE of fats we are eating that have either positive or negative effects. Studies have shown that industrial polyunsaturated oils, (those that are in processed foods) have been linked to premature aging and saturated fats have been proven to improve skins texture and firmness. I am sure you are all wrinkling up your noses saying, “What?

And we thought saturated fats are BAD!!” Of course, I could spend the rest of the time discussing the virtues of saturated fat. However, we will save that for another article. Suffice to say that evidence indicates that the right type of saturated fat, meaning that from unprocessed sources i.e. grass fed meats, eggs, and butter are all quite beneficial to the skin. While fish oils can be beneficial to the body as a whole, too much isn’t good either. Too much EPA, an omega-3 precursor to DHA can interfere with the body’s ability to fight inflammation. Hence the old saying, “Everything in moderation.”

While so many people spend small fortunes on creams, potions, facials etc., healthy skin must start on the inside- nourished by a healthy diet. **A diet low in refined carbohydrates, sugar, and processed fats, and rich in quality sources of protein, vitamins, and minerals - this is the best recipe for good skin health.**

In the next article we will discuss how the “gut” influences the skin and we will offer suggestions on how to keep our intestines healthy. 🐾