

# NUTRITION FOR YOUR SKIN



DERMATOLOGY  
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As Hippocrates said, "Let food be thy medicine."  
Today, we have more access than ever to nutritious foods that can promote healthy, clear skin and decrease the risk of cancer including skin cancer.

## WHY IS THE STANDARD AMERICAN DIET (SAD) NUTRITIONALLY INADEQUATE?

Almost 90% of the SAD consists of animal products (meat, eggs, dairy) and processed foods (oil, sugar, white flour products). These foods contain almost no antioxidants, folate, vitamin C, vitamin K or those thousands of micronutrients essential for healthy cells and to prevent DNA damage. Even worse, many animal products such as butter, cheese, and milk are rich in saturated fat, the consumption of which can increase the risk of cancer, high cholesterol, and heart disease. Our high animal fat, processed food diet creates an environment that promotes premature aging, obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer.

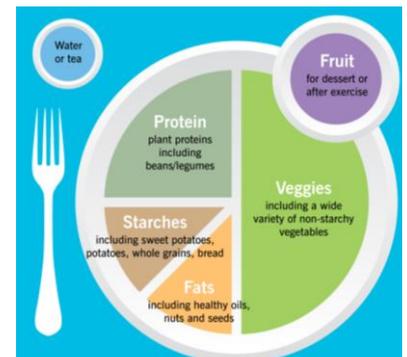
## HOW CAN MY DIET HELP TO PROMOTE HEALTHY SKIN?

The major cause of premature aging and skin cancer is ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun or from tanning booths. UV exposure creates free radicals in the skin, which wreak havoc through inflammation and DNA injury leading to cell mutations and skin cancer. The good news is that micronutrients called antioxidants can neutralize free radicals and protect us from UV's damaging effects. Since the interaction between different nutrients in foods is what makes them effective, simply taking vitamin supplements is inadequate. Eating an assortment of colorful plant foods enables our bodies to detoxify and repair our cells. This is why a whole foods, plant based (WFPB) diet rich in plant micronutrients promotes optimal health including skin health.



## WHICH FOODS MAY HELP MY SKIN TO BE AS HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE?

- Beta carotene:** Boosts the immune system's ability to fight disease and may reduce cancer risk  
*Orange-colored vegetables and fruits, including carrots, pumpkins, squash, sweet potatoes, cantaloupe, apricots, mangoes*
- Lycopene:** Protects against sunburn and cancer  
*Red-colored vegetables and fruits, including tomatoes, watermelon, guava, papaya, apricots, pink grapefruit, blood oranges*
- Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** May inhibit inflammation and skin cancer progression  
*Walnuts, flaxseed (also fatty fish such as salmon)*
- Tea Polyphenols:** Powerful antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, tumor-inhibiting properties—can repair DNA in UV-exposed skin  
*Green Tea*
- Selenium:** Decreases risk of cancer development, decreases risk of cancer death  
*Brazil Nuts (also meats such as chicken and grass-fed beef)*
- Vitamin C:** Linked to lower risk of cancer death and less noticeable wrinkles  
*Oranges, lemons, strawberries, raspberries, leafy greens, broccoli, kale, bell peppers, kiwis*
- Vitamin D:** Builds bones, boosts immune system, may reduce melanoma risk  
*Adults should take a 600-2000 IU/day D3 supplement*
- Vitamin E:** Proven antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, absorbs UV rays, improves skin resilience  
*Almonds and other nuts, sunflower and other seeds, spinach, soybeans, wheat germ*
- Zinc:** Helps immune system fight cancer, activates antioxidants, increases DNA repair activity  
*Legumes such as hummus, chickpeas, lentils, black beans*



## WHICH SKIN CONDITIONS CAN BENEFIT FROM A WHOLE FOODS, PLANT BASED (WFPB) DIET?

- ✓ Acne: Avoid high glycemic index foods (processed breads, sugary carbonated drinks, sweets) and dairy
- ✓ Psoriasis: Studies show improvement on a low-calorie diet
- ✓ Atopic dermatitis / eczema: May benefit from probiotics such as those found in miso soup, sauerkraut, kimchi, tempeh, sourdough bread, olives
- ✓ Wrinkles, sagging skin, deep lines: Avoid high glycemic index foods such as sugars and high-glycemic carbohydrates

## HELPFUL RESOURCES / REFERENCES

American Academy of Dermatology: [aad.org](http://aad.org) ("Beauty from the Inside Out")  
Cayuga Center for Healthy Living ([cayugamed.org/CCHLhome.cfm](http://cayugamed.org/CCHLhome.cfm))  
Coalition for Healthy School Food: [healthyschoolfood.org](http://healthyschoolfood.org) ("Nutrition 101")  
Dr. T. Colin Campbell's Center for Nutritional Studies: [nutritionstudies.org](http://nutritionstudies.org)  
Forks Over Knives: [forksoverknives.com](http://forksoverknives.com)  
Skin Cancer Foundation: [skincancer.org](http://skincancer.org) ("Can Your Diet Help Prevent Skin Cancer?")  
The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine: [pcrm.org/health](http://pcrm.org/health)

