

Keeping Your Skin Healthy

Because your skin is your body's largest organ, it is important to keep your skin healthy as it works hard to protect you. In fact, your skin plays an important role as the first line of defense between your body and the outside world, protecting you from bacteria, viruses, pollution and chemical substances that you encounter in the workplace and home.

Your skin is the ultimate multitasker; regulating body temperature, maintaining fluid balance, controlling moisture loss, acting as a barrier and shock absorber, recognizing pain sensations, and protecting you from the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays. It is important to understand that there are many factors that can impact your skin. Factors affecting your skin include genetics, aging, hormones, and health conditions such as diabetes. External factors that can affect your skin include unprotected sun exposure, frequently washing your hands and washing your hands with hot water. An unhealthy diet, stress, lack of sleep, not enough exercise, dehydration, smoking, and some medications can also impact your skin's ability to operate as an effective protective barrier.



Tips for Healthy Skin

Did you know that your diet can improve your skin health from the inside out?

- Research concludes that food identified as being skin healthy include:
 - Mangoes. These contain compounds with antioxidant properties that help protect components of the skin—like collagen.
 - Tomatoes. One study on mice, found that daily tomato consumption decreased the development of skin cancer tumors by 50% after UV light exposure. Lycopene—the pigment responsible for giving tomatoes their deep red color, is thought to play a role in the protective effect of tomatoes against UV damage.

- White Tea. This has anti-cancer and anti-aging properties. One study found that some ingredients in white tea may protect the skin from oxidative stress and immune cell damage.
- Calorie restricted diet. Scientists found that reducing the number of calories consumed by 35% had an impact on aging inside a cell. Cutting calories caused the cell's protein makers—ribosomes, to slow down and decelerated the aging process.
- Decrease alcohol intake. Researchers have discovered that for each 10-gram increase in consumption of alcohol each day, the risk of basal cell carcinoma rose by 7% and the risk of cutaneous squamous cell carcinoma rose by 11%.
- Moisturize your skin. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends:
 - Use warm water instead of hot water and use a gentle, fragrance-free cleanser when showering.
 - Pat your skin dry and immediately moisturize after showering to trap moisture in your skin.
 - Use a cold compress or moisturize dry skin instead of scratching it.
- Quit smoking. Smoking ages facial skin and narrows the blood vessels found in the outer layer of the skin. The narrowing of the blood vessels in the outer layer of the skin reduces blood flow and exhausts the skin of the nutrients and oxygen it needs to remain healthy.
- Get your beauty sleep. Getting the proper amount of sleep will get rid of those dark circles around your eyes and improve skin tone. During sleep, your body enters repair mode and regenerates skin, muscles, blood and brain cells. Also, without the proper amount of sleep, your body is unable to produce new collagen which prevents your skin from sagging.

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