



DRY AS A

DESERT

**TIPS AND TRICKS
FOR HEALTHY SKIN**

“People say that beauty’s only skin deep; it’s what’s on the “inside” that counts. Our insides are certainly important, but skin is your first layer of defense against the outside world. Skin can also give important clues to your overall health. Learn to take good care of your skin, so your skin can keep taking good care of you (1).”

Your skin is in fact the largest organ in the body and its function is protection. Think about all the things your skin is exposed to on a daily basis; keyboards, door handles, food, other people, etc. As a safeguard, you want your skin to be strong, yet soft, and not age too quickly. We ask a lot from our skin so we might as well take care of it. Here are some of the best tips and tricks for healthy skin.

Hydration. Staying hydrated is one of the key factors to keeping skin rejuvenated, smooth, soft, and healthy. The outermost layer of the skin needs constant moisture to help it flush away toxins and carry nutrients to the skin's cells. Without adequate water intake, the skin becomes duller, and wrinkles and pores may become more prominent. A great tip for having hydrated skin is to strive to consume 8 glasses or 64 oz of water per day. Not only will being adequately hydrated improve your skin's health, but it will improve your overall health as well!

Sunscreen. Sunscreen talked about by dermatologists as the closest thing to the fountain of youth as it can slow down skin aging and prevent skin cancer. It is important to apply sunscreen to exposed skin (like the face) daily, even if it isn't overly sunny outside. You want to look for a sunscreen that offers broad-spectrum protection, is SPF 30 or higher and is water resistant. In addition to sunscreen, daily face washing and moisturizer should be used to keep your skin from looking as dry as the desert.

Vitamin D. The skin is a unique source of Vitamin D for the body. Cells in our skin are able to use the sun's rays to convert Vitamin D into a usable form in the body. In fact, approximately 35% of adults in the United States are Vitamin D deficient (2). It is to be noted that you can still absorb your daily Vitamin D from the sun if you apply sunscreen daily. In addition, topical application of Vitamin D has been known to assist with skin conditions like psoriasis and can protect against damage from the sun (3).

Vitamin E. The role of Vitamin E in the skin is to protect it from free radicals and reactive oxygen species. You may be thinking, what does that mean? Well, vitamin E protects against UV-damage from the sun. Vitamin E can also be used as an anti-inflammatory agent for the skin after UV exposure as it can reduce skin swelling, skin thickness, and edema. Additionally, both topical and oral supplementation of Vitamin E have been known to increase skin hydration in both men and women (4).

Collagen. This has become a buzz word in the media recently and there is much to unfold when it comes to collagen. Collagen is a protein that gives the skin a smooth and elastic feel. It is also located in our bones and joints. Our bodies make less collagen as we age and continues to decline with sun exposure, smoking, excess alcohol, and lack of sleep and exercise. Oral collagen supplements in the form of pills, powders, and certain foods are believed absorbed by the body and have become quite popular among consumers. Some studies have found that supplements improve skin elasticity, however, the research is still in its infancy. Collagen supplements can be expensive, so it is important to note that natural collagen can be found in animal flesh like meat and fish that contain connective tissue, but collagen can be synthesized in the body and production is supported by adequate Vitamin C, Zinc, Copper, and amino acids lysine and proline (5).

Protecting your skin is important for overall health because of skin's role in protection from environmental exposures. As the first line of defense, and often the first thing we notice about ourselves and others, having healthy, vibrant skin has a huge impact on our everyday life. It is something to be taken care of.

Citations:

1. Keep Your Skin Healthy. 2015. NIH News In Health. Accessed February 24th, 2023.
2. <https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2015/11/keep-your-skin-healthy#:~:text=Tips%20for%20Healthy%20Skin,sunscreen%2C%20and%20wear%20protective%20clothing>.
3. Vitamin D Deficiency. 2022. Cleveland Clinic. Accessed February 21st, 2023. <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/15050-vitamin-d-vitamin-d-deficiency#:~:text=About%201%20billion%20people%20worldwide,States%20have%20vitamin%20D%20deficiency>.
4. Rizova E, Corroller M. Topical calcitriol--studies on local tolerance and systemic safety. Br J Dermatol. 2001;144 Suppl 58:3-10.
5. Vitamin E and Skin Health. 2012. Oregon State University. Accessed February 24th, 2023. <https://lpi.oregonstate.edu/mic/health-disease/skin-health/vitamin-E#:~:text=Vitamin%20E%20has%20been%20considered,all%20signs%20of%20skin%20inflammation>.
6. Collagen. 2021. The Nutrition Source – Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Accessed February 24th, 2023. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/collagen/#:~:text=Human%20studies%20are%20lacking%20but,with%20osteoarthritis%20or%20in%20athletes>.

Quiz

1. What is the minimum amount of water you should consume daily for healthy skin and overall body functioning?
2. What percent of adults are Vitamin D deficient?
3. Vitamin __ is an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory agent.
4. What are some reasons our bodies make less collagen besides aging?
5. What are some dietary sources of collagen?
6. What healthy skin tip will you use to improve the health of your largest organ?