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The Aligned Skin Wellness Guide





In addition to providing the body external protection, skin has a variety of functions, including removing waste through the pores, supporting vitamin D production, and giving the sense of touch. Many people associate a radiant complexion with good overall health, and they're right.
The skin is the largest organ in the body, covering 22 square feet.

The skin also acts as a mirror for overall health. Have you ever noticed dark circles under your eyes when you don't get enough sleep, blemishes cropping up when you're stressed, or dull, dry skin when you aren't eating right? That's the skin providing a physical manifestation of what's happening within your body. In fact, a study published in Dermato-Endocrinology found a clear link between nutrition and the skin's condition, which demonstrates the direct impact of supplementation and diet on the health and appearance of the skin. Here's your guide to get glowing by nourishing the skin from the inside and out.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF…

Does your skin breakout in certain areas?

Are you noticing that the elasticity is decreasing?

Are you confused about what type of skincare products are good for your skin?

Has your skin slowly lost its youthful glow?

Is your skincare routine the right one for you?

Does your skin breakout when you eat certain foods?

Are you frustrated when you're still getting acne well into your 30's and 40's?

SYMPTOMS OF IMBALANCED SKIN…

- Acne
- Premature Wrinkles
- Dull Complexion
- Uneven Texture
- Enlarged Pores



Causes/Reasons Behind Your Skin Issues…

As research digs deeper into the link between internal and external health, it's becoming clear that successful skin care is rooted in cellular beauty.

Lack of Sleep: Sleep and skin are deeply interconnected. Have you ever noticed that when you didn't get enough sleep that you wake up with dark circles under your eyes? If you don't get enough sleep your body produces more cortisol — leading to inflammation. In a recent study, it showed that pretty much all common skin conditions get worse when you aren't getting enough sleep.[1] Sleep plays a crucial role in facilitating skin repair and regeneration. It is during this time that our body produces higher levels of collagen, a protein responsible for maintaining the skin's elasticity and youthful appearance. After several days of very little sleep (3-4 hours a night) one study found that skin elasticity was greatly affected.[2]

Skin Dehydration: Water plays a crucial role in maintaining the normal function of the skin, particularly its outermost layer, the stratum corneum (SC). The regulation of water loss from the skin is vital and relies on the intricate structure of the SC.[3]

However, hydration is not solely dependent on water intake. Factors such as ultraviolet exposure, aging, and low temperatures significantly influence the composition of skin ceramides, which can lead to increased trans epidermal water loss and adversely affect skin hydration. The incorporation of Vitamin C, collagen, and probiotics may enhance ceramide production and subsequently improve skin hydration. The impact of these various factors on skin hydration can differ, but their effects are generally substantial enough to warrant consideration in both research and clinical evaluations of skin health.[4]

Poor Nutrition/High Sugar/High Processed Foods Diet: It shouldn't be a question in today's age that diet and nutrition play essential roles in the optimum functioning of the human body, including the skin. Thus, certain diet habits such as less water intake, high-fat diet, refined sugar, and certain food additives are unhealthy and

harmful to the skin while alternative healthy diet habits such as adequate water intake; consumption of antioxidants and polyphenolic-rich fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes; a low glycemic index diet; probiotics; and phytoestrogens should be adopted to enhance skin health.[5]

Stress: As the body's largest organ, the skin often reflects what's happening inside your body. Stress can cause increased inflammation, slow down wound healing, and negatively impact skin conditions. Your glands produce more oil when under stress, which can cause acne to worsen in people who are prone to outbreaks

Hormone Imbalances: Hormone imbalances can significantly impact the condition of the skin throughout various stages of life. As individuals age, there is a natural decline in estrogen levels, which results in the skin becoming thinner, drier, and less elastic. Additionally, testosterone, which is predominantly produced in men but also present in smaller quantities in women, can enhance sebum production, potentially resulting in acne and oily skin.[6]

Imbalanced Skin Microbiome: What is the skin microbiome? The skin microbiome is a collection of microorganisms, including bacteria, fungi, viruses, and mites, that reside on the skin's surface and in the deeper layers of the skin. These microorganisms play an essential role in skin health, regulating the skin's pH and moisture levels and preventing infection.

A skin microbiome imbalance, known as skin dysbiosis, can lead to a range of skin issues, including:

- Dryness, itching, and flakiness
- Redness and inflammation
- Acne and breakouts
- Excessive oiliness or dryness
- Skin sensitivity and irritation

An increasing body of research is revealing connections between dysbiosis and conditions such as eczema, rosacea, and psoriasis. A well-maintained microbiota, which comprises the naturally occurring microorganisms within our bodies, offers numerous advantages for overall health. It not only fortifies the immune system but also aids in digestion, enhances nutrient absorption, and promotes skin health. Recent studies have shifted their attention from gut flora to the skin microbiome, which encompasses the genetic material of microorganisms residing in our bodies. Findings indicate that both oral and topical probiotics can significantly reduce skin inflammation and facilitate wound healing.[7]

Lifestyle Practices & Exposures: A recent survey discovered that the average adult uses 12 personal care products a day with a combined 126 individual chemical ingredients. This can include soap, deodorant, lipstick, and more.[8] These daily exposures can create a toxic burden to the body overtime and cause imbalances in the skin. These imbalances can show up as acne, skin sensitivity, underlying inflammation, and rashes.

Your Detoxification Pathways: Clear skin always starts from within. The human body is remarkably efficient at detoxifying itself; however, the daily exposure to an increasing number of toxins in our plastic-laden environment can overwhelm this natural process. As a result, there are times when your body may require additional support to eliminate these harmful substances.

The Chemistry

Skin Structure:

What is the skin? The skin is made of water, protein, fats and minerals. Your skin protects your body from germs and regulates body temperature. Nerves in the skin help you feel sensations like hot and cold. Your skin, along with your hair, nails, oil glands and sweat glands, is part of the integumentary system. “Integumentary” means a body’s outer covering.

Anatomy 101
What are the layers of the skin?
Three layers of tissue make up the skin:

- Epidermis, the top layer.
- Dermis, the middle layer.
- Hypodermis, the bottom or fatty layer.

The Epidermis:
The epidermis, which is the outermost layer of the skin, serves several essential functions. This visible layer is composed of skin cells that contain keratin, a protein that contributes to its structure. The epidermis performs the following roles: It acts as a protective barrier, preventing bacteria and germs from penetrating the body and bloodstream, thereby reducing the risk of infections. Additionally, it safeguards against environmental factors such as rain and sunlight. The epidermis is also responsible for the continuous production of new skin cells, replacing approximately 40,000 cells that are shed daily, resulting in a complete renewal of the skin every 30 days. Furthermore, Langerhans cells within the epidermis play a crucial role in the immune system, assisting in the defense against pathogens. Lastly, the epidermis contains melanin, the pigment responsible for skin color, with varying amounts influencing the pigmentation of skin, hair, and eyes.

The Dermis:
The dermis constitutes 90% of the skin's overall thickness. This intermediate layer of skin serves several important functions: It contains collagen and elastin, two essential proteins. Collagen provides strength and resilience to skin cells, while elastin ensures

flexibility and aids in the skin's ability to return to its original shape after being stretched. It supports hair growth, as hair follicles are anchored in the dermis. The dermis is also responsible for sensory perception; the nerves within this layer alert you to sensations such as heat, itchiness, and softness, as well as pain.
Additionally, oil glands located in the dermis maintain skin softness and smoothness, preventing excessive water absorption during activities like swimming or exposure to rain. Sweat glands in the dermis facilitate the release of sweat through skin pores, which is crucial for regulating body temperature. Finally, blood vessels in the dermis deliver essential nutrients to the epidermis, ensuring the health of the skin layers.

The Hypodermis

The bottom layer of skin, or hypodermis, is the fatty layer. The hypodermis:
Cushions muscles and bones: Fat in the hypodermis protects muscles and bones from injuries when you fall or are in an accident.
Has connective tissue: This tissue connects layers of skin to muscles and bones.
Helps the nerves and blood vessels: Nerves and blood vessels in the dermis (middle layer) get larger in the hypodermis. These nerves and blood vessels branch out to connect the hypodermis to the rest of the body.
Regulates body temperature: Fat in the hypodermis keeps you from getting too cold or hot.
What else makes up the skin?
One inch of your skin has approximately 19 million skin cells and 60,000 melanocytes (cells that make melanin or skin pigment). It also contains 1,000 nerve endings and 20 blood vessels.

Collagen

Collagen is a fundamental protein that serves as the main structural framework in the skin and different connective tissues in the body, including tendons, ligaments, and cartilage. This protein is naturally created by the body and is essential for the skin's strength, elasticity, and firmness, primarily derived from amino acids, with glycine being the most prevalent among them. This protein is also important for achieving a youthful, hydrated look and for preventing sagging skin. Unfortunately, as we age, our collagen levels decline, which can lead to wrinkles and a decrease in skin elasticity.

Fibroblasts

Fibroblasts, located in the dermis, the deeper layer of the skin, play a crucial role in producing collagen. These cells create collagen fibers that are arranged in a specific way to form a network, providing the skin with strength and elasticity. As we age, collagen production decreases, leading to the appearance of wrinkles and other signs

of aging, which can be worsened by factors like UV exposure and smoking. Collagen is a vital protein that serves as the primary structural element in the skin and other connective tissues, including tendons, ligaments, and cartilage.

Recommended Labs

AST: aspartate aminotransferase
ALT: alanine aminotransferase
DHEA: dehydroepiandrosterone sulfate
E2: estradiol
Progesterone
TSH: thyroid stimulating hormone
Testosterone

Add on Functional Labs

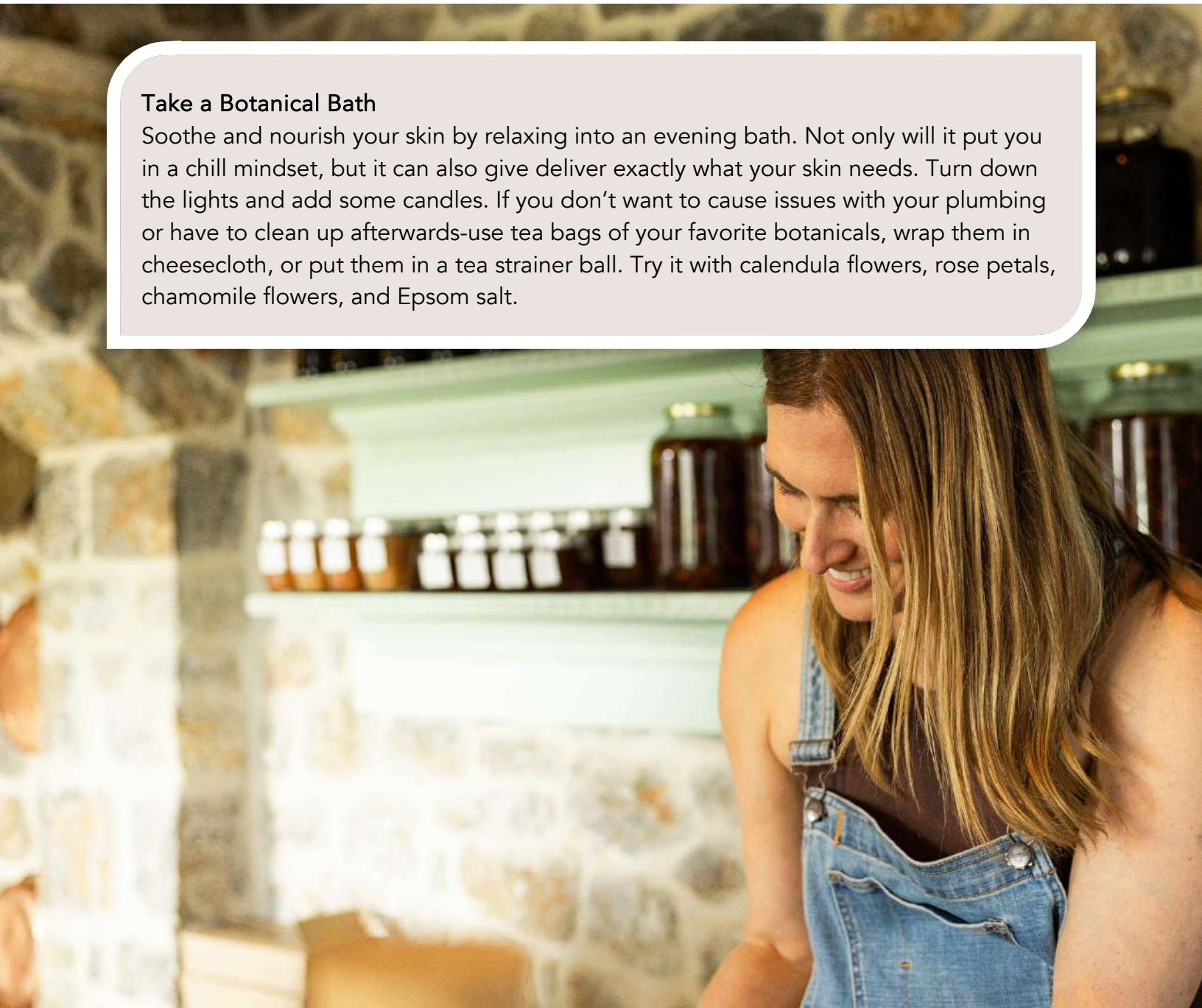
Genetic Skin Test
Provides insight into the genetic contribution of important biological areas involved in maintaining the health of the skin, thus allowing for a more targeted approach to skincare.



Mindset

Reduce Stress

It's not a coincidence, but a sign that your body is reacting to the stress. Like physical health, emotional well-being is essential and can affect the body in much the same way. A study published in the Archives of Dermatology evaluated the relationship between acne and stress among university students.[9] The study found that acne considerably worsened during exam time, verifying that emotional stress from external sources has a significant effect on skin health. Find ways to decompress through activities such as exercise, meditation, or yoga. Indulge with a cup of chamomile tea and relax while its anti-inflammatory properties soothe your skin.



Take a Botanical Bath

Soothe and nourish your skin by relaxing into an evening bath. Not only will it put you in a chill mindset, but it can also give deliver exactly what your skin needs. Turn down the lights and add some candles. If you don't want to cause issues with your plumbing or have to clean up afterwards-use tea bags of your favorite botanicals, wrap them in cheesecloth, or put them in a tea strainer ball. Try it with calendula flowers, rose petals, chamomile flowers, and Epsom salt.

Skin Foods

Burdock Root Juice

Burdock root has long been used in traditional medicine to treat many skin aliments, including eczema, dryness, psoriasis, and acne. This root supports the detoxification process, increases circulation to the epidermal tissues, and destroys harmful bacteria and fungi.

Burdock root is highly regarded as a “blood purifier” in Chinese medicine for its ability to remove toxins from the bloodstream while increasing the output of urine.

This versatile root can be applied topically to problem areas, taken in capsule or tincture form, and infused in a tea. You can also juice the fresh root with an apple.

Consume Antioxidants

Antioxidants help stabilize free radicals by giving them an electron, preventing damage.

They do not become free radicals themselves after donating an electron.

Antioxidants can neutralize free radicals by breaking them down, making them harmless.

Consuming a diet rich in antioxidants is essential for overall health.

Antioxidants protect the skin from free radicals, provide sun protection, and support cellular repair. Foods derived from plants are the top source of antioxidants. This category encompasses fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, herbs, spices, and even cocoa. Plants naturally contain antioxidants like carotenoids, flavonoids, isothiocyanates, and phenolic acids.

Support the Gut/Skin Axis

It's essential to nurture both your skin microbiome and your gut microbiome for the best skin health. The gut-skin axis is a key player in our overall well-being. The health of your gut lining is fundamental here. When your gut microflora is out of balance, it can lead to what many functional medicine practitioners call leaky gut, allowing certain particles to escape and potentially causing an inflammatory reaction in the skin of those who are sensitive.[10] Eat probiotic-rich foods such as yogurt, kefir, miso, and other fermented foods. Take a high-quality probiotic that contains a diverse range of species to help restore gut health.

Bone Broth

Bone broth is rich in vitamins and minerals, but it also provides key amino acids like proline and glycine that provide your body a foundation to make collagen. A recent animal study confirmed that bone broth collagen peptides can significantly help with aging skin and help support collagen synthesis.[11]

Garlic

The medicinal use occurs when the fresh garlic is crushed or chopped because than the allin converts into allicin. Studies have shown garlic to be beneficial for the microbiome and for its unique antibiotic properties.[12]

Mushrooms

Mushrooms in skincare is a recent development, but the effects can be quite powerful. They are used in food, incorporated in topical products, and taken in supplement form. A recent study about the development of mushroom-based cosmeceutical formulations with anti-inflammatory, anti-tyrosinase, antioxidant, and antibacterial properties, found that mushrooms in skincare can help with anti-aging and reduce oxidative stress on the skin.[13] When eating mushrooms, they can support the body's microbiome (which in turn supports skin health), supports the body immunity, and helps to decrease inflammation. Shiitake mushroom is an excellent mushroom to cook with and you can add it to stir fry, cook it with a meat dish, or use it in a soup.



Artichokes & The Brassica Family

Artichokes are a tasteful veggie that contains a phytonutrient called cynarin, which stimulates the production of bile and hence, improves digestion. Often called a superfood, artichoke is loaded with antioxidants including liver-supportive silymarin, packed with vitamin C, and rich in fiber to keep the body regular. In addition, artichokes are a good source of fiber and are quite nutritious with vitamin C, vitamin K, folate, magnesium, potassium and manganese packed in. In fact, some studies have shown that artichoke leaf extract is beneficial for overall liver health.[14] The Brassica family includes broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, collard greens, kale, rutabaga, radishes, bok choy, and turnips.

Sea Buckthorn

Sea buckthorn, a plant that grows across the mountainous regions of Asia and Europe, can efficiently counteract these symptoms. The medicinal properties are found in the seed and fruit oil, which contain a unique profile of fatty acids including 3, 6, 7, and 9, and are loaded with vitamins, antioxidants, and flavonoids. Treasured for being the richest plant-based source of omega-7 palmitoleic acid available, sea buckthorn has been studied more than 200 times and is commonly used in modern cosmetics and skin products.
How to use it: Add to a smoothie for a radiant glow or even apply it topically.

Specialized Diets

If you're suffering from chronic skin issues like acne, highly sensitive skin or conditions like eczema than going deeper into your diet could be quite effective in reducing or even eliminating your symptoms. Some effective protocols include an anti-inflammatory diet, a low histamine diet, and a low sugar diet. In the nutrition module, we will take a deep dive into what foods could be a trigger for your symptoms and learning what to eliminate.



Try it...

On the Glow Smoothie

Loaded with skin supporting phytonutrients, collagen, and probiotics

½ cup frozen mango
1 ½ cups of coconut milk
2 tsps. turmeric powder
2 Tbsps. coconut kefir
1 scoop collagen powder
A hint of cinnamon

Holistic Science-Backed Skin Treatments...



Milk Thistle:

Clinically studied dosage: 175mg up to 600mg/day

Time of day: anytime.

Recommendations: Ideally with a standardized extract of 80% silymarin.

What it is: Nourish your liver and clear you skin with milk thistle. This well-known plant has been used for more than 2,000 years to cleanse and support the body. Its active substance is called silymarin, which is found in the seeds.

Science: Studies have shown that milk thistle not only supports the liver, but actually rejuvenates it. It's a potent antioxidant, has anti-inflammatory properties, and has been proven to repair and grow new liver cells. The liver has hundreds of jobs to perform, and one very important duty is to remove toxins and waste from the blood.
Adding milk thistle to your supplement regimen will support the cleansing process while giving you the added benefit of glowing skin.



Vitex:

Clinically studied dosage: 500mg-1000mg

Time of day: anytime.

Recommendations: best for hormone related acne.
Vitex works on normalizing progesterone levels in the body through the endocrine system. Progesterone is a female sex hormone that can sometimes be unbalanced causing symptoms like PMS and acne when estrogen levels are too high. Clinical research has shown that vitex can start correcting imbalances as soon as 10 days but, to see a full benefit it usually takes about 3 months to rebalance the body.

What it is: Vitex, otherwise known as chaste tree, is a powerful woman's plant that helps to normalize hormones.

Science: A recent study found that a nutraceutical formulation that contained vitex was effect at supporting skin health and antioxidant status in women of menopausal age.[15]

DIM:

Clinically studied dosage: 150mg/day

Time of day: anytime.

What it is: 3,3′-Diindolylmethane (DIM) is a compound derived from the digestion of indole-3-carbinol, which is found in cruciferous vegetables.

Science: It has been shown to promote healthy estrogen metabolism by shifting estrogen toward the protective 2-hydroxyestrogen metabolites instead of the 16-hydroxyestrone.

Vitamin C:

Clinically studied dosage: 1000mg/day

Time of day: anytime.

What it is: What it is: Also known as ascorbic acid, this water-soluble vitamin is a mainstay for overall skin health. Vitamin C is an important co-factor in collagen production and has been shown to improve skin diseases like atopic dermatitis in earlier studies. L-ascorbic acid (LAA) is the chemically active form of Vit. C. In nature, Vit. C is found in equal parts as LAA and D-ascorbic acid.

Science: A study published in the Frontiers in Physiology Journal concluded that a diet rich in vitamin C can be an effective preventative tool for specific skin diseases.[16]



Collagen:

Clinically studied dosage: 2g-3g/day

Time of day: anytime.

Recommendations: It’s a great addition to a morning smoothie, like the on the glow.

What it is: Hydrolyzed collagen serves as the primary structural protein in our connective tissues, particularly in areas like the skin, tendons, and ligaments. While the body doesn't utilize it in its original form, it breaks it down into smaller molecules known as amino acids, making it easier to absorb. This process allows collagen to act as a valuable source of amino acids that can enhance skin health.

Science: A review of 19 studies and 1,125 participants aged between 20 and 70 years old showed that taking collagen for 90 days was effective in reducing skin aging including wrinkles and improving skin elasticity and hydration.[17] Another study showed that Vitamin C has the potential to accelerate collagen production.[18]

Omegas:

Clinically studied dosage: 1000mg-2,000mg/day

Time of day: anytime.

Recommendations: be sure to take it with food to maximize the bioavailability.

What it is: You can find them in plenty of foods such as walnuts, seafood, fatty fish, and specific seed and plant oils. They fall into three categories: alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA), and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA).

Science: Omega 3's can play quite a role in skincare from decreasing the skin's inflammatory response, providing hydration and moisture, and supporting the skin barrier function.

Glowing Skin Tea Blend:

This tea blend is great for the person's battling some blemishes and is looking for additional support and detoxification. Dandelion acts as a detoxifying agent and a diuretic, burdock root is a blood cleanser, and calendula reduces inflammation along with the turmeric. It's the perfect combination to support your elimination pathways to give that gorgeous glow.

Ingredients (per cup)

1 tsp dried dandelion leaf
1 tsp dried burdock root
1 tsp dried calendula
1/8th tsp fresh turmeric root



What Can You Do Now...



Skin Hydration Test:

You can check for dehydration by trying the "pinch test." Simply pinch a small section of skin on your arm using your thumb and forefinger. If you're properly hydrated, the skin should return to its normal position within a few seconds after you release it. If it doesn't bounce back, it's a good idea to drink some water.

Rose Hip Seed Oil Topically:

For a youthful glow, look no further than rose hip seed oil, nature's hidden gem. This extraordinary oil is loaded with vitamin A and retinoic acid, known for its ability to regenerate skin cells, smooth out fine wrinkles, and improve skin pigmentation and texture. Frequently considered a natural alternative to Retin-A, rose hip seeds deliver essential fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals to the skin. This fantastic oil influences cell membranes and supports the keratin migration cycle, leading to faster skin cell regeneration.

Apply the oil to your face before bed and wake up feeling rejuvenated.

Goto Kola Topically:

What it is: Gotu kola has been used for more than 3,000 years in China, India, and Africa as a panacea, but it never quite gained notoriety in America. It's considered one of the best-kept secrets in the beauty industry, a holy grail of antiaging herbs that can help rebuild collagen and decrease the appearance
of stretch marks.

Science: Gotu kola contains a group of unique active compounds including pentacyclic triterpenes, asiaticosides, madecassosides, and asiatic acid that, together, promote fibroblast proliferation and encourage the synthesis of collagen. This helps to improve the tensile strength of new skin while also preventing the formation of scar tissue. A 2013 study published in the Advances in Dermatology and Allergology Journal revealed that gotu kola could be effectively used in the treatment of photoaging skin, cellulite, and stretch marks.

How to use it: It can be applied topically, infused in a tea, or taken internally as a tincture or capsule.

Black seed oil Topically:

If you suffer from acne, try using a dime size amount of black seed oil each night before bed. A study showed that acne improved over 63% when black seed oil was used for two months.[19]

Ditch synthetic fragrances

Did you know that your perfume could contain up to a hundred synthetic compounds? Perfumes are one of the most common causes of a contact allergic reaction. Opt for a plant-based scents from natural ingredients.

Practice Skin Brushing

The lymphatic system is made up of 600 nodes and glands that work to clear out toxins and waste. A great way to support this system is through dry skin brushing, which not only stimulates lymphatic flow but also boosts circulation and removes dead skin. To do this, brush your skin in a circular motion moving upwards, starting at your feet, and progressing to your torso, and from your hands to your chest, aligning with the direction of lymph flow.

Get out in Nature

It can be as simple as hugging a tree, going barefoot in the grass, or spending time in a nearby park. Skin Microbiome Study: A small December 2020 study illustrates how exposure to microbial diversity can positively impact our own human health. When participants interacted with urban green spaces by digging in the dirt, brushing up against the plants, and, of course, breathing in the air, the diversity of their skin microbiomes increased.[20]

Clean Skincare

Evaluate: Check all personal care products you're using on the Environmental Working Groups (EWG) website. The EWG's website currently has evaluated 118,760 personal care products and the ingredients. Review the EWG's rank for your product and replace it if it's a 3 or higher.

a. **Visit:** https://www.ewg.org/skindeep

Replace: Replace the personal skincare products that ranked high on the EWG. You can do this by searching for new products yourself and then checking them, purchasing verified products, or utilizing some of our recommendations on Fullscript.

Get Rid of Expired Products: Check all the products you're using and throw out anything that's over two years old. A 2013 study published in the *International Journal of Cosmetic Science* evaluated the makeup routines and habits of 44 women (ages 18 to 28), and the results were more than a little cringeworthy. 70% of women in the study used some type of expired product—mostly eye makeup (mascara, eyeliner, eye shadow).



Your skin isn’t just a surface—it’s a mirror of your inner world. It reflects your nourishment, your rhythms, and the alignment between your body and mind. This guide is designed to be your personal roadmap to radiant skin, blending science-backed nutrition, intentional rituals, and elevated self-care practices rooted in integrative medicine.

“Radiance is created when your daily choices, internal balance, and self-care are aligned.”

MEET YOUR DOCTOR….



Unlock the power of functional testing to understand your body from the inside out. Explore the link between gut health, energy, and overall vitality, and uncover personalized strategies to restore balance.

Harness the potential of powerful botanicals carefully selected to support digestion, immunity, and hormonal harmony. Each protocol is designed to nourish your body, mind, and spirit—helping you thrive naturally.

Step into a world where science meets holistic care. With Dr. Michele Burklund, your wellness journey is guided by insight, intention, and transformative care.

Your body holds the answers—let Dr. Burklund help you read them.

Visit: drmicheleburklund.com

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