



healthy skin

CLINICAL INFORMATION FOR PRACTITIONERS AND PATIENTS

Keep your skin looking clear and smooth. The skin is the largest organ of the body and requires a steady supply of micronutrients to support new cell generation. For this reason the skin is particularly susceptible to nutritional imbalances or deficiencies. By making healthy dietary and lifestyle choices you can improve the way skin looks and feels.

Skin appearance and anti-ageing are hot topics for both men and women. In the quest for youthful looking skin, many people have turned to cosmetic and surgical intervention as a 'quick fix'. However your skin is a reflection of your body's inner processes and overall health. Smooth and clear skin is a first visible sign of a properly functioning body supported by healthy lifestyle and diet, rich in good quality fresh food and nutrients.

Diet

Healthy diet is a foundation for improving your skin condition. You can make a difference to how your skin looks and feels by making healthy food choices.

- **Eat a variety of fresh vegetables** including green leafy foliage. Green, yellow, red and blue fruits and vegetables are high in antioxidant compounds.
- **Fresh fruit** – aim to consume at least three pieces every day. Raspberries, blueberries and strawberries are rich in antioxidants and protect your skin from free-radicals.
- **High fibre foods** such as whole grains and legumes are important and assist with eliminating any toxins as well as improving your digestion.
- **Include good quality protein** rich foods such as lean meat, fish, chicken, dairy and eggs. Protein is important as it contributes to your skin's elasticity and firmness.
- **Good fats** are known as 'moisturising foods'. Sources include avocado, nuts and seeds, olive oil and flaxseed oil.
- **Avoid fad diets** and restricted dieting, they slow down metabolism and don't benefit your skin and body.
- **Eat regularly** – three meals per day with healthy snacks in between. Your food is your fuel, choose foods wisely and eat them in sensible amounts, your body and skin will look great.

Lifestyle

The way you live and your habits affect your skin. These tips can help improve your vitality and maintain a radiant complexion.

- **Stay hydrated** to support your body's proper functioning. Your skin is reliant on good hydration. The human body consists of 75 per cent water and the skin

itself is composed of 70 per cent water. Avoid dehydration by drinking at least eight to ten glasses of water every day. Reduce consumption of caffeinated drinks such as colas, coffee and tea as they may dehydrate your body.

- **Caffeine** – excessive consumption depletes the body's natural reserves of vitamins, especially vitamin C which is responsible for collagen formation. Try non-caffeinated herbal teas as a tasty alternative.
- **Exposure to sunlight** is important for the production of vitamin D. Aim to get outdoors for 20 to 30 minutes each day. Many people will achieve this by walking to the bus stop or corner store. Avoid hotter times of the day between 10am and 3pm and over exposure to the sun. Wear a hat and a good mechanical sunscreen with an SPF factor of at least 15+.
- **Avoid exposure to chemicals** including harsh cleaning products.
- **Avoid cigarette smoking** both active and passive. Smoking is a precursor to premature ageing. Smoking has also been linked with many chronic illnesses. It is a toxin and depletes the body of many important antioxidant nutrients.
- **Relaxation, rest and a good night's sleep** can improve your complexion and boost your immune system. Aim for at least eight hours of quality sleep every night.
- **Moderate exercise** stimulates oxygen intake and improves blood flow to the skin, giving you a beautiful natural glow. Exercise helps minimise stress and skin flare-ups associated with stress. It also tones your muscles, reduces the appearance of cellulite and makes your skin look firmer.
- **Skin care products** such as a natural cleanser, moisturiser and exfoliator are a necessity for the topical care of your skin. Look for chemical free cosmetics to avoid any skin irritation.
- **Skin brushing** with a loofah is a great exfoliating technique, best done whilst showering. This action removes dead skin cells and aids in new skin cell production leaving your skin youthful and radiant in appearance. It also stimulates circulation aiding in cell metabolism and reduction of cellulite.
- **Pamper yourself** with a facial and massage at a spa or indulge into homemade facials.

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Skin Concerns

The skin mirrors the processes within the body and if there are any nutritional deficiencies they will affect the skin. During times of stress, extreme weather and poor nutrition your skin can reflect signs of dryness, ageing, dehydration or break-outs. Some common skin concerns include:

- **Acne** generally affects the areas of the face, the upper chest and the back. Acne is most common during adolescence and affects the majority of teenagers as a result in hormones' increase, in both males and females. To reduce its affects, cleanse your skin properly and follow a well-balanced diet high in fibre, zinc and raw foods. Avoid cigarette smoking, excessive consumption of dairy, alcohol, caffeine and sugar.
- **Dermatitis** is an 'inflammation of the skin' for example a rash. There are several different types of dermatitis which usually are triggered by an allergic reaction to specific allergens. This term may be used to refer to eczema, which is also known as dermatitis eczema or eczematous dermatitis. A diagnosis of eczema often implies childhood or atopic dermatitis. Herbal therapies may assist with its treatment under supervision of the trained practitioner. If you have dermatitis, avoid any source of irritation and wear loose fitting 100 per cent cotton clothing.
- **Eczema** is an inflammation of the top layer of the skin. The term eczema is broadly applied to a range of persistent skin conditions. These include dryness and recurring skin rashes that are characterised by one or more of these symptoms: redness, swelling, itching, dryness, crusting, flaking, blistering, cracking, oozing or bleeding. Avoid anything that might trigger a flare-up such as wool clothing, perfume and fabric softeners. Supplement your diet with zinc, fish oils and vitamin A rich foods or ask your healthcare practitioner for advice on appropriate supplementation.

Herbal and Nutritional Medicines

There is an abundance of natural compounds and therapies that help maintain skin health and aid in the treatment of problematic skin. Some of them include:

- **Vitamin A** acts as an antioxidant to neutralise elements harmful to your skin. It helps prevent wrinkles, resist infection and keep your skin looking fresh and clear. Vitamin A is an effective tissue healer, useful in blotchy skin, acne and skin dryness. Rich sources of vitamin A are cod liver oil, carrots and alfalfa.
- **Vitamin C** is required for the growth and repair of tissues in all parts of the body. It is needed for the formation of collagen, which is an important protein for skin elasticity, wound healing and the repair and maintenance of cartilage.
- **Vitamin E** is one of the most well-known nutrients used for skin care. Many topical creams contain vitamin E. When applied to the skin it is effective for reducing the appearance of scarring, stretch marks and age spots. Your skin is able to absorb natural vitamin E effectively however taking vitamin E orally is also recommended.

- **Zinc** is an essential mineral for healthy skin and in the body works closely with vitamin A. The body requires zinc for the synthesis of collagen which assists in the healing of wounds. Zinc can be found in pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and wheatgerm.
- **Silica** is an important mineral for skin, hair and nails. Rich sources of this mineral are contained in sprouts, alfalfa, kelp, sunflower seeds, all providing super nutrition for the skin well-being.
- **Vitamin B3** is used in moisturisers to reduce skin pore size, balance texture, and smooth out fine lines and wrinkles by increasing the production of collagen and decreasing its breakdown. Vitamin B3 also reduces age spots, skin yellowing and acne.
- **Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs)** cannot be produced by the body and are therefore 'essential' in the diet. There is growing evidence that EFAs assist in keeping skin moisturised, smooth and healthy. Additionally, EFAs have also been shown to have an anti-inflammatory effect on the skin, assisting with relief from symptoms often associated with eczema. Good dietary sources of EFAs can be found in fish, seeds and nuts.
- **Herbal Medicines** and nutrients may assist the health of your skin. Many people are familiar with the topical applications for example *Aloe vera* for sunburn relief. Additionally there are many herbs that assist with problematic skin, for example Burdock (*Articum lappa*) for acne, Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*) for tissue strength and Yellow Dock (*Rumex crispus*) for dermatitis – these can be prescribed by your healthcare practitioner.

Whilst there is an abundance of natural nutrients and herbs derived from both supplements and diet, it is advisable to seek guidance from your practitioner if you wish to improve and maintain your skin's well-being and have a fresh radiant complexion. Your healthcare practitioner will be able to prescribe high quality 'practitioner only' medicines that are best suited to your individual health needs.

Almond and Papaya Facial Scrub

Blanched almonds.....	¼ cup (40g)
Oat bran.....	½ cup (40g)
Sweet almond oil.....	1 teaspoon
Pureed papaya fresh.....	2 tablespoons
Natural yogurt.....	1 tablespoon
Honey.....	2 tablespoons

1. Using a food processor, process almonds until they resemble fine breadcrumbs; transfer to small bowl. Add remaining ingredients, mix well.
2. Apply small amount of scrub to damp cleansed face.
3. Gently rub in circular motion over face concentrating on problem areas, avoid eye area.
4. Rinse face with warm water; pat dry.
5. Store remaining scrub in a screw-top jar in refrigerator for one week.

Please note:
If you have any of the chronic skin conditions, consult your practitioner prior.

