



Beauty Boosting *Supplements*

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The inside-out approach to skin health

Every morning I throw a handful of about 25 vitamins and supplements into my mouth and gulp them down with water. Breakfast. This is not advisable for everyone, but in short, I believe in supplements! To be clear, not every medical professional loves them. Supplements are controversial in the medical field, and some can even interact with medications you are taking, so I'll say this: Please ask your personal medical doctor before taking something new.

For years, I was extremely skeptical. Having been trained in traditional Western

medicine, I felt a multivitamin plus iron and calcium was good, but all of the other stuff -- a gimmick! Then, one day, I tried glucosamine, and after years of a swollen knee due to an injury, I suddenly felt better. I take it every day, and if I miss it, my body really lets me know. But we aren't talking knees, are we? We're talking skin! The point is that I became more open-minded about trying different supplements.

As it turns out, newly discovered, plant-derived antioxidants can prevent and reverse signs of aging, while marine extracts can encourage healthier hair and nails. And some things that have been

around for many years are now being studied for their anti-aging effects. I will touch on my personal favorites, and share my experience with them.

Glucosamine

I'm convinced! Collagen II is the common denominator between skin and cartilage, so with the decreased inflammation in my knee, I take this daily and notice that it is also benefiting my skin. We mostly know about glucosamine as it is used for joint health, but there's growing evidence that n-acetyl-glucosamine can lighten areas of increased skin pigmentation, make fine

lines and wrinkles less apparent and offer some protection against skin damage due to its anti-inflammatory effect. Cell culture studies show that adding glucosamine to skin cells boosts the synthesis of hyaluronic acid, an important regulator of skin hydration. Hyaluronic acid levels decline with age. This partially explains why mature skin is dryer and has a rougher texture than more youthful skin. Hyaluronic acid is also involved in wound healing, and younger skin with more hyaluronic acid heals more rapidly and is less likely to scar. Hyaluronic acid levels in skin decline with age. As an aside, my favorite filler, Juvederm® is composed of cross-linked hyaluronic acid.

Heliocare®

This is a fascinating new supplement derived from a South African fern. The fern -- polypodium leucotomos -- protects itself against harsh UV exposure with multiple compounds. Now, this fern extract is available in capsule form. When taken 30 minutes before sun exposure, it is proven to provide an SPF of about 8 (repeat after three hours if still in the sun). It does not substitute for sunscreen, but will help with "missed spots" that inevitably happen at the beach. Taken daily, it could prevent chronic sun damage that occurs over years of incidental sun exposure. There is strong scientific support for the supplement's skin-protecting ability. Heliocare® dramatically reduced the incidence of sunburn as well as damage to collagen and elastin, the fibers that keep skin smooth and firm, in two published Harvard Medical School studies. That's because it is particularly effective against the "aging" UVA rays that most sunscreens don't protect against completely. It could prevent brown spots, wrinkles and even skin cancer. This would be a great supplement for surfers or golfers to take daily.

Viviscal PRO®

There are so many hair-growth supplements and snake oils on the market. I don't have a hair "problem" per se, but I do have a yearly seasonal shed. A few months ago I decided to try Viviscal with absolutely zero expectation. I just added it to the "pile" of vitamins I gulp down daily, which means I only took it once a day instead of twice. After a few weeks, I had noticeably shinier hair and many new tapered, regrowing hairs. My manicurist noticed that my nails were growing

faster. I was impressed with the results. Viviscal encourages hair growth using a proprietary marine complex. Known as AminoMar C, it contains a combination of marine protein, minerals and vitamins that help regenerate new cells and feed existing cells. A Scandinavian professor developed AminoMar C after isolating the key protein molecules of the Inuit's protein-rich fish diet. Viviscal also contains vitamin C, silica and biotin, which further support healthy hair. But sorry, guys -- it promotes healthier hair that is already growing but is not known to correct male pattern baldness.

Resveratrol

A few years ago, Harvard researchers reported extended lifespan and resilience in mice that were fed resveratrol. Since then, in the hopes of living a long and healthy life, I have been taking this supplement daily. This is not the type of supplement that changes things overnight. However, I suspect it has a cumulative effect over time. Resveratrol is a member of a group of plant compounds called polyphenols. These compounds are thought to have antioxidant properties, protecting the body against the kind of damage linked to increased risk for conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. Resveratrol is found in the skin of red grapes, but other sources include peanuts and berries. Most resveratrol capsules sold in the U.S. contain extracts from the Japanese and Chinese knotweed plant *Polygonum cuspidatum*. Time will tell whether this supplement is effective, but large, reputable institutions have a strong, persistent interest and a myriad of ongoing studies attempting to elucidate all of the benefits of this compound. There is also a bit of debate on whether it really is bioavailable when taken orally, so a sublingual (under the tongue) version might be on the horizon.

Melatonin

Melatonin is known as the "sleep hormone." I wish I had discovered it sooner! After years of insomnia, this was the cure for me. It may not have the same profound and consistent result in everyone, but recent studies find that melatonin has many other positive effects on the body. The hormone melatonin produces a number of health benefits in terms of your immune system. It's a powerful antioxidant and free radical scavenger that helps combat inflammation. Melatonin may even have a role in slowing the aging of your brain. Melatonin increased the life span

of animals by up to 20% -- prolonging their youthful character in the process. Scientific evidence now suggests that melatonin plays a crucial role in a variety of metabolic functions, including acting as an antioxidant (stronger than vitamin E) and providing neuroprotection, anti-inflammatory defense and immune system support. Because melatonin production reduces with age, experts believe that its decline contributes to both the aging process and a generalized deterioration of health. The benefits may be attributed to the regulation of circadian rhythms, day/night body cycles that determine cellular behavior.

Beautiful, healthy skin is a function of what is going on both on the inside and the outside. You can help maintain and prevent skin aging with supplements. Of course, sun protection, de-stressing, exercising, drinking water, reducing alcohol intake and eliminating tobacco are a must. Once you have removed offending factors, you can optimize body function with supplements. My philosophy is that the cells should have what they need at their disposal. The rest gets filtered out. Of course, each individual has a different tolerance and a different response to supplements, so proceed with caution. Until we find Ponce De Leon's fountain of youth, we must do the best we can. ■

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