



5 Tips for
*Healthy
Skin*

Beautiful skin is always "in," and luckily, the recommendations for beautiful skin are the same as the ones for healthy skin. Maybe you don't want a million products on your shelf or a 12-step skin care program, but a few consistent behaviors can really make a difference to your health in the long term. Make healthy, no-nonsense choices:

1) Protect yourself from the sun

Sun protection is arguably the most important aspect of skin care. UV light directly affects the DNA in your skin cells, causing mutations (skin cancer) and photo damage (wrinkles, brown spots).

Using daily sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher is ideal. If out in the sun, an SPF of 60 or higher, with repeat application every two hours, is ideal. My favorite products for daily use are EltaMD 46, Matrix 30 by Neostrata and Rosaliac 30 by La Roche-Posay, but Neutrogena is great, too. For outdoors, I love Cellox Shield 60 by La Roche-Posay and Elta MD products, but Coppertone Sport 50 is excellent as well.

Avoid the sun. Seek shade or be indoors between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. when UVB, the sunburn wavelength, is at its peak.

Wear protective clothing. Hats, preferably wide-brimmed; lightweight, long-sleeve shirts; and UV-protectant laundry rinses are great aids in protecting against sun damage.

Most sun damage occurs before age 15, so protect your children! Also, know that applying sunscreen and then "laying out" does not constitute good sun protection.

2) Wash your face

It is simple. It is true. Your face should be washed twice a day in order to prevent buildup, congested pores, breakouts and even wrinkles. Believe it or not, I still have patients who tell me they go to bed with makeup on. The eye makeup — mascara and eyeshadow — sheds small particles into and around the eyes at night that cause irritation and puffiness. This puffiness then comes down like a deflated balloon and leaves the skin around the

eyes more wrinkled. Gasp! This is just what we are trying to avoid.

Cleansers should be chosen based on skin type. I recommend different ones for acne, rosacea and pre- or postmenopausal skin, and what you chose should, ideally, be compatible with other products in a skin care regimen. My favorite mild cleansers are DCL Blue and Cetaphil Gentle Cleanser. These are great for make-up removal.

3) Avoid smoking

Smoking accelerates skin aging, as it accelerates aging in all tissues in the body. It causes production of free radicals that are known to damage collagen. Smoking also causes vasoconstriction, which chokes off blood supply to the skin and, over time, leads to a wrinkled, sallow, dull look on its surface. In addition, the repetitive facial expressions you make when smoking — such as pursing your lips when inhaling and squinting your eyes to keep out smoke — can contribute to wrinkles.

As a side note, when we look at signs of aging holistically, the voice tone is an important factor. Voice changes from smoking hint at a much more advanced age — which is just what Calabasians are trying to avoid.

4) Eat well

A balanced diet is important to overall health. What you put in shows on your skin! Plenty of water, antioxidants, supplements and a low-carb diet can all play a role in promoting skin health.

Antioxidants that come with fruits and vegetables — particularly grapes and succulents — are great for you. During the dry winter season, a handful of almonds or walnuts or even a spoonful of peanut butter (unless you are allergic) are helpful in providing raw materials for sebum, your body's natural moisturizer. A low carbohydrate diet prevents glycation, or hardening of the tissues due to sugar molecule attachments, which can again lead to wrinkling. In general, I do think supplements, such as fish oil, resveratrol, cinnamon, glucosamine and vitamin E are helpful.

5) Reduce stress

Easier said than done! Stress can ravage the body by suppressing the immune system. The immune system is responsible for skin cancer surveillance, and when it is suppressed, abnormal cells are allowed to grow. In addition, stress triggers cortisol release, which leads to acne breakouts. Stress management involves stepping back from situations to put them into perspective. Prioritizing tasks can help. Start on the items on the list instead of fretting about the list. Exercise, such as Pilates or yoga or even kickboxing, increases blood flow in the body and releases endorphins that signal a state of well-being. Long, deep breaths are helpful, as is meditation. A nice conversation full of laughter with a good friend could benefit you both.

This year, and every year, healthy skin is in. Enjoy your skin and treat it well, like you do a fine car or a beautiful home, by maintaining and restoring it with loving care. The results over time will be worth the effort. There are many things you can do to maintain the largest organ in your body, and hopefully, these five tips are a great start. Happy New Year! ■

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