

# Nutrition and Beauty

## Nourish Your Looks

Try these 5 tactics for cultivating beautiful skin, hair, and nails. *By Lynn Grieger, RD, CDE, cPT*

**Q**uick: how much time do you spend on your hair (trims, coloring, shampoo, conditioner, special treatments); skin (cleansers, toners, lotions, facials); and nails (manicures, pedicures, polish) each year? Compare that to the amount of time you spend choosing food to make your hair thick and shiny, your skin fresh and radiant, and your nails healthy and strong. Admit it—I bet you haven't spent more than an hour, if that, thinking about the food-beauty connection. You will now.

Instead of focusing on what you put *on* your hair, skin, and nails; think about what goes *into* your body.

Your skin—the body's largest organ—weighs seven to nine pounds and would cover twenty square feet if it were stretched out. Just like hair and nails, skin renews itself and grows every day. If you want flowers to grow strong and beautiful, you add water and fertilizer. If you want healthy and beautiful skin, hair, and nails, you've got to give them the nutrients they crave. Here are our top five tactics for cultivating beauty from within.

**1 Choose your beverage carefully.** According to beauty experts, drinking adequate water improves skin tone and elasticity and gives you healthy, dewy skin. I may water my house plants religiously to avoid drooping, sagging, wrinkly leaves. But do I “water” my body and skin in the same conscientious manner? **Jessica Fishman, MS, RD, nutrition consultant for the New York Dermatology Group, encourages her clients to drink water or unsweetened tea throughout the day to keep their skin hydrated from the inside out to encourage elimination of toxins and improve cell turnover.** It's this constant production of fresh, healthy cells that provides a new layer of gorgeous skin cells. You can slather on all the super creamy skin lotion you want, but if you don't drink adequate amounts of water, you won't get the fresh, younger-looking skin you crave.

Why tea in addition to water? The antioxidants found in all types of tea—green,

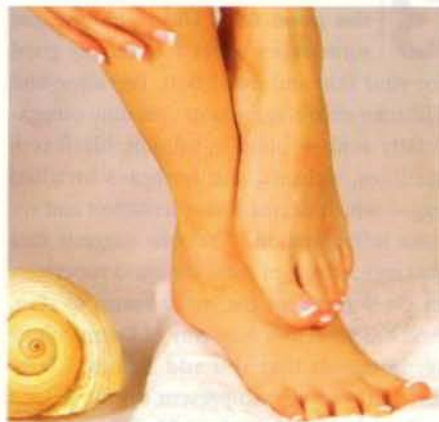
white, and even black—help decrease inflammation that can lead to wrinkles. *Unsweetened* is the key word here. Beverages loaded with sugar can promote wrinkles, and we all know what those sweet drinks do to our waistlines.

While water and tea enhance the skin's appearance, alcohol detracts from it. Shelly Marie, MS, LDN, RD, whose workshop, "Spa Cuisine — Eating for Beauty," is in great demand, observes that as little as four ounces of alcohol per day can dry out the skin, leading to dilation of fragile facial capillaries.

**2 Eat colorful fruits and vegetables.** Inflammation is all the rage lately in the health world, implicated in everything from heart disease to cancer. But inflammation can also lead to wrinkles and decrease the health and vitality of your skin, according to Nicholas Perricone, MD, FACN, author of *The Perricone Prescription*. What causes inflammation? The biggest culprits are sugar and highly processed starchy foods such as crackers, doughnuts, and white bread. Cutting back on these foods helps you decrease inflammation, but eating more inflammation-fighting foods leads to a bigger benefit. (See page 20 for more about inflammation.)

Eating fruits and vegetables is good for your heart and may help prevent certain types of cancer thanks to their antioxidant, inflammation-fighting ability. These colorful foods will also decrease inflammation in your skin, reducing wrinkles and giving you a younger look. Plus, the vitamins found in colorful fruits and vegetables help prevent hangnails and split, broken nails and give your hair luster and vitality. Nutrition experts recommend that you eat a minimum one and one half to two cups of fruit and two and one half to three cups of vegetables every day.

Want to know more? Check out the Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity (ORAC)—a ranking of the antioxidant potency of foods. According to the Agricultural Research Service's (ARS) Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University in Boston, the top-scoring fruits and vegetables measured in ORAC values are prunes (5700), raisins (2830), blueberries (2400), blackberries (2036), and kale (1770). ARS research shows that eating plenty of these foods can increase your blood antioxidant levels by ten to twenty-five percent. The higher your antioxidant intake, the less likely you are to have wrinkles, lackluster hair, and brittle nails.



## Vitamins and Minerals Essential for Beautiful Skin, Hair, and Nails

**VITAMIN A:** prevents wrinkles and promotes dewy skin and strong nails  
**Food Sources:** dark green or dark orange fruit and vegetables

**VITAMIN C:** provides a healthy framework for beautiful skin and hair  
**Food Sources:** citrus fruit, tomatoes, peppers, and broccoli

**B VITAMINS:** decrease inflammation  
**Food Sources:** whole grains, pork, turkey, peanuts, seeds, and chicken

**ZINC:** essential for skin, hair, and nail growth and repair  
**Food Sources:** poultry, seafood (especially oysters), liver, and legumes

**SELENIUM:** helps prevent damage from the sun  
**Food Sources:** white meat chicken, brown rice, eggs, and whole grains

**VITAMIN D:** protects against sun damage  
**Food Sources:** milk, many types of yogurt

**IRON:** promotes healthy hair growth and strong nails  
**Food Sources:** lean sirloin, dark meat poultry, lean roast pork, fortified breakfast cereals

**3 Ditch the bad fats, but embrace the good fats.** Did you know that some types of fat are actually good for your skin and nails? **Both Perricone and Fishman encourage you to consume omega-3 fatty acids—found in salmon, black cod, sardines, walnuts, and omega-3 fortified eggs—which decrease skin irritation and reduce inflammation.** Perricone suggests that you include one of these omega-3 superstars in every meal for the most beautiful skin. And the American Academy of Dermatology recommends that you add omega-3 fatty acids to your diet to prevent brittle, flaking nails. A bonus: they also add shine and improve hair texture.

Because some research studies show that saturated fat and trans fats—known as the *bad fats* because of their negative effects on heart health—can also contribute

to aging skin, avoid them as much as possible. Cheese, animal fats, fried foods, and fast foods contain large amounts of these bad fats. But when was the last time somebody told you to eat fat because it's good for you? Toss chopped walnuts on salads, choose omega-3 fortified eggs at the grocery store, and enjoy salmon and sardines often.

**4 Get enough protein for power and beauty.** Protein is a great weight-loss aid because it helps keep hunger at bay. It also builds muscles and a strong immune system. But did you know that protein is essential for healthy, beautiful skin, hair, and nails? Maye Musk, MS, RD, model, nutritionist, and author of *Feel Fantastic —Maye Musk's Good Health Clinic*, explains that all our organs require protein. Since skin is the body's largest organ, it makes sense that it requires optimal amounts of protein to stay fresh, healthy, and beautiful. In addition, both hair and nails require adequate amounts of protein to grow and stay strong. In fact, dieters who skimp on protein often notice that their hair becomes lifeless and breaks easily and their nails grow more brittle.

Animal proteins are good sources of zinc, iron, and B12; all are crucial to prevent dry, brittle nails, limp hair, and sandpaper skin. Inadequate iron and protein levels may also be a cause of hair loss, according to the American Academy of Dermatology. If you're a vegetarian, make sure you choose fortified breakfast cereal, pumpkin seeds, wheat germ, and whole grains to get optimal amounts of these nutrients.

To nourish your hair, nails, and skin, include protein with all meals and snacks: peanut butter on whole wheat toast for breakfast, or a quick and delicious smoothie made with plain yogurt, skim milk, whey protein powder, and frozen fruit. Add broiled chicken to your salad at lunch, or have a whole grain pita stuffed with tuna and veggies. Splurge on salmon for dinner (and check out our great recipe).



**Baked Salmon With Mango Salsa**  
By Chef Michelle Dudash, RD

**SALMON**

- 2 five-ounce pieces of wild salmon, boneless, skinless
- Raw garlic
- Salt and ground pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon olive oil

**MANGO SALSA**

- 1 mango, diced
- ½ jalepeno, minced
- ½ red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 green onion, chopped
- Lime juice to taste
- ¼ teaspoon oregano, dried
- 2 tablespoon fresh cilantro, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

To make the salsa, combine all ingredients in a bowl and toss lightly. Set aside.

To make fish, preheat oven to 400°. Oil and season the salmon. Place it on one side of a large piece of aluminum foil or parchment paper. Fold over the other side of the foil and seal in the salmon. Bake for about ten minutes (for 1" thickness) or until desired doneness.

Remove salmon from the pouch and garnish with the mango salsa.

*Recipe courtesy of Michelle Dudash, RD, of Chef Dudash Nutrition, [www.dudashnutrition.com](http://www.dudashnutrition.com).*



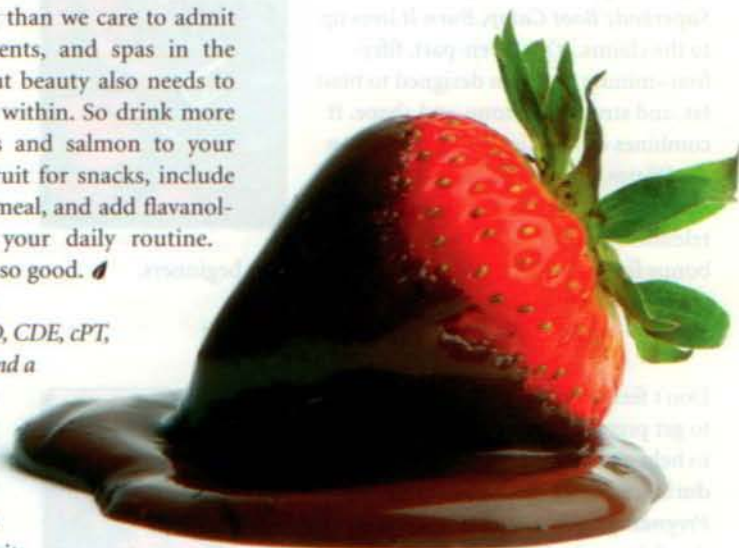
**5** **Believe it or not—enjoy chocolate!** I adore sunscreen with added cocoa butter for its velvety texture, tantalizing aroma, and skin-softening qualities. But it doesn't compare to the pleasures of eating cocoa. Research published in the *Journal of Nutrition* reveals the potential rewards of consuming flavanol-rich cocoa and the ways it might benefit skin from the inside out. In one study, women who regularly drank a cocoa beverage rich in flavanols (an antioxidant) showed decreased sensitivity to ultraviolet radiation, increased skin blood flow, improved skin structure and texture, and enhanced skin hydration. The research was funded by Mars, makers of Dove Dark Chocolate and CocoaVia, which are guaranteed to contain at least one hundred milligrams of cocoa flavanols per serving. I'm sure chocolate lovers will agree that if dipping strawberries in dark chocolate will help promote glowing, healthy skin, we'll suffer through eating them as often as possible.

**FEED YOUR BEAUTY**

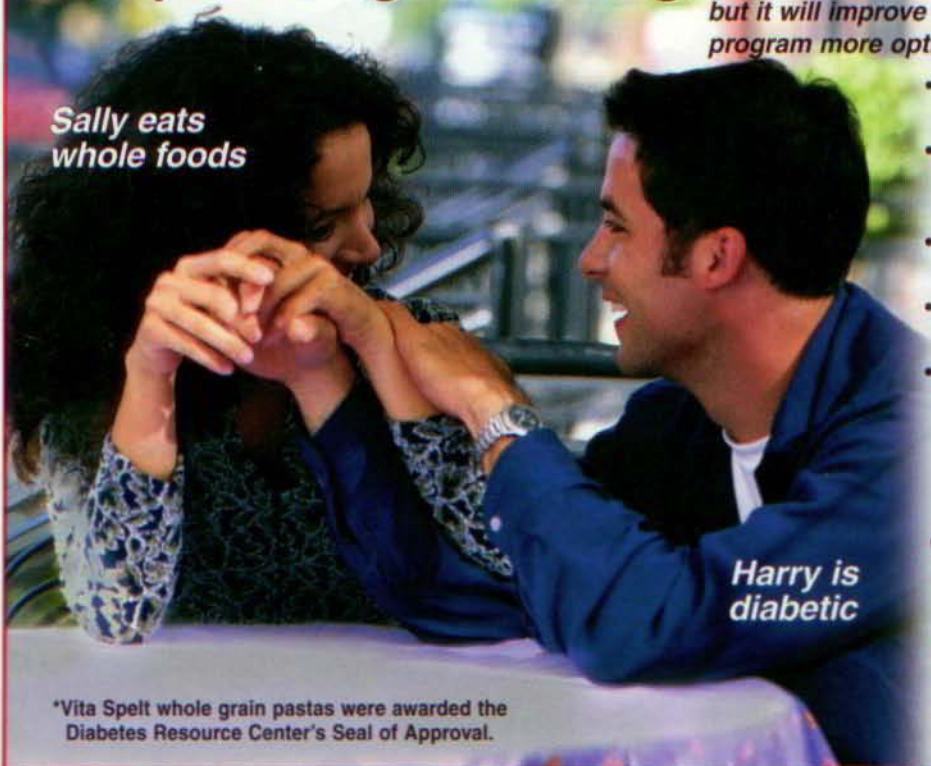
We use sunscreen to prevent ultraviolet ray damage to our skin, wear hats to protect our hair from the same damaging rays, slather on boatloads of hand cream, and spend more money than we care to admit on lotions, treatments, and spas in the name of beauty. But beauty also needs to be nourished from within. So drink more water, add walnuts and salmon to your grocery list, grab fruit for snacks, include protein with every meal, and add flavanol-rich chocolate to your daily routine. Beauty never tasted so good. ♦

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*beauty treatment is a fruit salad with different types of berries drizzled with chocolate.*



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