

The Natural Way

As the skin is our body's largest organ, it is imperative that we feed it with plenty of foods packed full of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and essential fatty acids. Sophie Chamings explains how

A well-fed skin will look supple, hydrated and radiant, ageing will not happen so quickly and skin issues will occur much less often. Below are some key things that the skin can't live without. Smoothies blended with fresh ingredients can be a great way to make sure you are getting enough of the foods you need each day.

VITAMIN A

Vitamin A taken internally will protect your skin from ageing as well as from the environment and the weather. Vitamin A is an antioxidant and will therefore fight free radicals in your skin, helping it to look youthful, healthy and fresh.



Which foods?

Think green and orange. Typical foods are: carrots, apricots, spinach and broccoli. I wouldn't recommend supplementing your diet with Vitamin A but make sure you eat lots of these foods instead.

VITAMIN C

Vitamin C is also an antioxidant and maintains the structural health of our skin cells. It is

fundamental for the production of collagen in the skin, which is essential for a smooth and plump complexion. Without collagen, skin would be dull and loose and we would all look old well before our time. Vitamin C is also essential for the regeneration of Vitamin E – another fundamental skin food.



Which foods?

Vitamin C is found in citrus fruits and juices, cantaloupe, strawberries, kiwi, cabbage, spinach, broccoli, and green peppers.

VITAMIN E

Vitamin E is an extremely powerful antioxidant and is essential for protection against the damage caused to the skin by free radicals. Taken internally, vitamin E will also minimise fine lines and wrinkles.



Which foods?

Asparagus, avocado, eggs, nuts, soya/soy, spinach, seeds and wholegrain foods

What are free radicals and antioxidants?

Free radicals are created when the skin is damaged. This happens when it is exposed to things such as pollution, the sun, chemical based products, smoking, alcohol etc. In the first instance, a number of free radicals are created but the real damage is done when these free radicals attack other cells to create more free radicals.

Antioxidants stabilise these free radicals preventing them from attacking cells and therefore from further damaging the skin. Consuming plenty of antioxidants (as well as using them on the skin) minimises the impact of free radical damage.



Which foods?

As well as those mentioned above, the following foods are packed full of antioxidants: berries, tomatoes, red grapes, garlic, green tea. ■

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