

GET

LOW ING

Natural
remedies
for radiant
and clear skin

BY MICHELE BURKLUND, ND

Who doesn't want gorgeous, glowing skin? Many people associate a radiant complexion with good overall health, and they're right.

The skin is the largest organ in the body, covering 22 square feet, on average. In addition to providing the body external protection, skin has a variety of functions, including removing waste through the pores, supporting vitamin D production, and giving the sense of touch.

The skin also acts as a mirror for overall health. Have you ever noticed dark circles under your eyes when you don't get enough sleep, blemishes cropping up when you're stressed, or dull, dry skin when you aren't eating right? That's the skin providing a physical manifestation of what's happening within your body. In fact, a study published in *Dermato-Endocrinology* found a clear link between nutrition and the skin's condition, which demonstrates the direct impact of supplementation and diet on the health and appearance of the skin. Here's your guide to get glowing by nourishing the skin from the inside and out.

The Seed Rotation Diet

Think that your hormones might be out of harmony? A hormone imbalance can cause a variety of symptoms, including dry or oily skin along with acne. Here's a little-known approach that can gently, but effectively, help balance hormones: Focus on seeds that promote, support, and metabolize estrogen and progesterone during specific days of your menstrual cycle.

On days 1-14 of the cycle (or from the new moon to the full moon), focus on flax and pumpkin seeds for an optimal estrogen balance. Flax seeds pack a double punch because they're rich in omega-3 fatty acids that provide the building blocks for hormones, and also contain lignans, which help the body bind excess estrogen. Pumpkin seeds are high in zinc, which supports the pathways of progesterone production.

From day 15 until menstruation (or from the full moon to the new moon), integrate ground sunflower and sesame seeds for optimal progesterone balance. This wonderful combination contains lignans, zinc, essential fatty acids, and selenium, which balances the hormones while supporting liver detoxification.

Take one or two tablespoons of ground seeds daily (grinding helps increase their bioavailability), mix them into a salad, add seeds to a smoothie, or sprinkle them over veggies.

Product Recommendations: From NOW Foods: Certified Organic Flax Seeds; Raw Pumpkin Seeds; Organic Sesame Seeds; and Raw, Unsalted Sunflower Seeds

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GET GLOWING

Want to really kick up your skincare regimen? Add 1-2 Tbs. of coconut oil to your diet, and also apply it to your face to maximize the benefits of this unparalleled superfood.

Coconut Oil

Looking for the perfect moisturizer that also has the potential to fight acne? Coconut oil penetrates deep into the skin while also providing antibacterial actions to battle blemishes. In fact, a recent study published in the *International Journal of Dermatology* found virgin coconut oil to be an effective treatment for atopic dermatitis.

Coconut oil is unique compared to other oils because it contains a medium-chain fatty acid called lauric

acid, which—when converted into monolaurin within the body—exhibits antimicrobial, antibacterial, and antifungal properties. A 2009 study published in the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology* concluded that lauric acid could be used as an effective alternative to antibiotic therapy for acne vulgaris.

Want to really kick up your skincare regimen? Add 1-2 tablespoons of coconut oil to your diet, and also apply it to your face each evening to maximize the benefits of this unparalleled superfood. Raw, organic, virgin coconut oil is best.

Product Recommendation:
Barlean's Organic Virgin Coconut Oil



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Gotu Kola

Want to look younger without resorting to harsh chemicals or invasive techniques? Gotu kola has been used for more than 3,000 years in China, India, and Africa as a panacea, but it never quite gained notoriety in America. It's considered one of the best-kept secrets in the beauty industry, a holy grail of antiaging herbs that can help rebuild collagen and decrease the appearance of stretch marks.

Gotu kola contains a group of unique active compounds including pentacyclic triterpenes, asiaticosides, madecassosides, and asiatic acid that, together, promote fibroblast proliferation and encourage the synthesis of collagen. This helps to improve the tensile strength of new skin while also preventing the formation of scar tissue. A 2013 study published in the *Advances in Dermatology and Allergy Journal* revealed that gotu kola could be effectively used in the treatment of photoaging skin, cellulite, and stretch marks. It can be applied topically, infused in a tea, or taken internally as a tincture or capsule.

Product Recommendation:
Eclectic Institute Fresh Freeze-Dried Gotu Kola

Rose Hip Seed Oil

Are you looking for a gentle and natural approach to fighting wrinkles? Rose hip seed oil is nature's secret ingredient for a youthful glow. This unique oil is rich in vitamin A and retinoic acid, which has been proven to regenerate new skin cells, reduce fine wrinkles, and improve pigmentation and the texture of skin. Often regarded as the natural alternative to Retin-A, rose hip seeds nourish the skin with essential fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals. This amazing oil acts on the cell membranes and supports the keratin migration cycle to enable a faster rate of skin cell regeneration. Apply the oil to your face before bed and wake up feeling rejuvenated.

Product Recommendation:
Aubrey Rosa Mosqueta
Rose Hip Seed Oil

Chaste Tree Berry

Do you tend to break out right before menstruation? Low progesterone could be the culprit. Chaste tree berry is a popular herb used for hormonal imbalances and premenstrual acne. This magnificent purple plant is native to the Mediterranean, but is now found all over the globe in temperate climates. It was first cited more than 2,000 years ago by the Greek physician Dioscorides as a treatment for the wives of soldiers

to remain chaste while their husbands were at war (hence the name). It works by normalizing progesterone levels in the body through the endocrine system.

Also known as vitex, chaste tree berry has been shown to benefit many common conditions for women, including PMS, irregular menstrual cycles, and menopause symptoms. It can be taken in a tincture or capsule, or even sprinkled on food to add a hint of a peppery taste.

Product Recommendation:
Bluebonnet Standardized Vitex Berry Extract

Burdock Root

Tired of battling problem skin? Burdock root has long been used in traditional medicine to treat many skin ailments, including eczema, dryness, psoriasis, and acne. This root supports the detoxification process, increases circulation to the epidermal tissues, and destroys harmful bacteria and fungi.

Burdock root is highly regarded as a "blood purifier" in Chinese medicine for its ability to remove toxins from the bloodstream while increasing the output of urine. This versatile root can be applied topically to problem areas, taken in capsule or tincture form, and infused in a tea. You can also juice the fresh root with an apple.

Product Recommendation:
Nature's Way Burdock Root

LIFESTYLE TIPS

Have you ever woken up with a blemish on a very stressful day? It's not a coincidence, but a sign that your body is reacting to the stress. Like physical health, emotional well-being is essential and can affect the body in much the same way.

A study published in the *Archives of Dermatology* evaluated the relationship between acne and stress among university students. The study found that acne considerably worsened during exam time, verifying that emotional stress from external sources has a significant effect on skin health. Find ways to decompress through activities such as exercise, meditation, or yoga. Indulge with a cup of chamomile tea and relax while its anti-inflammatory properties soothe your skin.

DIY Honey & Pumpkin Face Mask

Does your skin need a little pick-me-up? Channel your inner alchemist by blending honey and pumpkin together for a refreshing mask. Pumpkins are loaded with natural exfoliating acids, antioxidants, vitamin C, and zinc, all of which translate to smoother and brighter skin. Honey contains antibacterial properties that help fight acne along with soothing and moisturizing skin and decreasing inflammation. Simply mix ¼ cup of pumpkin (canned, unsweetened) with ½ teaspoon of honey and a hint of coconut milk. Apply this luscious mask for 20 minutes and rinse.

Product Recommendation:
MyChelle Dermaceuticals Incredible Pumpkin Peel



Michele Burklund, ND, graduated from the prestigious Bastyr University in Seattle. "I have no doubt that the power of natural healing can enhance anyone's life at whatever stage or age they are," says Burklund, who specializes in helping neurological patients. Visit healthyfashionista.com to learn more about Burklund and read her entertaining and informative blogs.

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