

[IMAGE]

Skin Wellness: From the Inside Out

By Julie T. Chen, MD

As the seasons transition from winter to spring, there are a few things you can do to make sure your skin looks healthy, feels healthy and actually *is* healthy. The most important thing to remember about skin health is that it needs to come from within. By that, I mean your mood, what you eat, how you sleep and whether you are exercising or not all have an impact on how you look and feel – and that includes your skin. So, if you are looking to portray the best you, inside and out, this spring and summer, don't just look to superficial things like clothes and skin-care creams; focus on the factors that affect your skin's natural glow from within.

Mood

If you make sure you sleep well and exercise, your mood usually will be better; and with better mood, you'll usually have an easier time eating clean and avoiding junk food. So, make sure you establish a good 7-8 hours of sleep and make time to move every day. If not, your body – including your skin – will show it.

Exercise

Most people think exercise has to do with getting into gym clothes and hitting the gym, but Mother Nature's backyard is just fine. You can even keep your regular clothes on and just go for a walk. As long as you're moving, circulation and oxygenation will improve, and your skin will look healthier. And while you're at it with the exercise, make sure you stay hydrated. Dehydration can definitely cause your skin to look dull.

Food

A quick way to remember which foods are anti-inflammatory is to eat mostly a plant-based diet, such that at every meal or snack, you are consuming mostly plant-based foods like nuts, vegetables, and low-sugar fruits. Inflammation ages skin and dulls the appearance of skin, so an anti-inflammatory diet will help to prevent those symptoms. Remember, your body is a machine; what you feed it is going to determine how you look, how you feel, and how your body runs on a day-to-day basis.

Other Tips

Even though the above lifestyle factors mean the most, you should still remember to use sunscreen. All the luxurious skin creams to reverse aging and dehydration can't do their job if you aren't preventing damage to begin with. So remember to prevent dry skin and aging by using sunscreen and following other tips to minimize painful sun exposure; this way, your luxury skin creams will be icing on the cake to give you the bright brilliant skin you deserve.

Dr. Julie T. Chen is board-certified in internal medicine and fellowship-trained and board-certified in integrative medicine. She has her own medical practice in San Jose, Calif. She is the medical director of corporation wellness at several Silicon Valley-based corporations, is on several medical expert panels of Web sites and nonprofit organizations, is a recurring monthly columnist for several national magazines, and has been featured in radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews. She incorporates various healing modalities into her practice including, but is not limited to, medical acupuncture, Chinese scalp acupuncture, clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit www.makinghealthyez.com.

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