

A Beginner's Guide to Vitamins and Supplements





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INTRODUCTION

It would be nice if our diets were always 100% nutritionally balanced and full of all the vitamins and minerals that we need in order to be healthy wouldn't it? But most of the time they're not. Most people eat out at least three nights a week, and don't eat very well the rest of the time.

Some people don't eat as well as they should because they are pressed for time and it's faster to get restaurant food when they're out running around. Some people don't eat as well as they should because they don't really know how to eat in a more healthy way. Regardless of the reasons that people don't eat a balanced diet each day the end result that is people need to take vitamins and minerals in daily supplements to help balance out their poor diets.

Most people would say that they take at least one vitamin each day. Some people take many more than that. Experts recommend different vitamins and supplements in different amounts to do everything from improve day-to-day health to cure disease. It can be very confusing to know which vitamins and supplements you should be taking and which ones you shouldn't take.

If you're taking prescription medication then there are supplements that you shouldn't take because they will interfere with the effectiveness of the medication that you're taking. There are also some vitamins that can be harmful if you take too much of them. So how are you supposed to make sense out of nutrition and know which vitamins and supplements you should take and which ones you shouldn't?

The information provided here should give you what you need to get a basic understanding of what vitamins and supplements do and which ones you really need to take in order to balance your diet, look younger, and accomplish other goals. Since it's just not possible to eat a balanced diet all the time, knowing which vitamins and supplements you can take to help make up for the times when you can't eat a balanced meal will help you give your body all the tools that it needs to stay healthy.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO TAKE VITAMINS AND SUPPLEMENTS?

There are certain vitamins and minerals that your body needs in order to function properly and stay healthy. Ideally you would get all the vitamins that you need from food but it's very hard to eat a diet that includes the right amounts of all the vitamins and minerals that you need. When you add in other factors like diets, stress eating, restaurant food, and other things that impact how often you eat and what you eat it can be even tougher to try and get all the nutrients your body needs from food.

In order to stay healthy and to get the vitamins and minerals that are missing from your daily diet you need to take vitamins and minerals as supplements. These supplements don't replace the need for food but they can make sure that your body gets the bare minimum amount of vitamins that it needs to function everyday so that you have enough energy and mental clarity to get through your day.

When you don't get enough vitamins and minerals you will be able to tell because you will feel sluggish and sick. You may get very tired, or you may just lose interest in life in general. If you take too many of one particular type of vitamin you might become physically sick. If you normally don't eat a very well balanced diet and you start to notice yourself becoming weaker and more tired it's a safe bet that a lack of vitamins and minerals is to blame. If you start taking a high quality multivitamin and eating a better diet you will probably feel good again in no time.

In addition to keeping you healthy and keeping your body running properly vitamins and minerals can do a lot of other things for the body. Vitamins and minerals can fight aging, help your skin and hair, help you stave off age-related illnesses and impairments, and even help you fight disease. Vitamins and certain types of herbal supplements can even help you manage chronic conditions like Rheumatoid Arthritis, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and other long term conditions that can make life uncomfortable and difficult.

Some cultures believe that vitamins and supplements can be used as medicine and that the body can heal itself when it is given the right amounts of vitamins and supplements to use as fuel so that prescription medicines aren't needed. While there is still a lot of debate about that topic there is some evidence to show that the body can heal itself of serious diseases under the right circumstances without the intervention of Western medicine.

Because vitamins and minerals are so essential to staying healthy people that have vitamin deficiencies can suffer from all kinds of health problems ranging from slowed growth process in children to malnutrition and even starvation in older people. Vitamin deficiencies are no laughing matter, and can happen to anyone.

WHO NEEDS TO TAKE VITAMINS?

Anyone that doesn't eat a very balanced diet needs to take vitamins and supplements to be healthy. That means that most people should be taking at least a few vitamins each day. There are some groups that need vitamins and supplements more than other groups though, because they have special nutritional needs. They are children and the elderly.

Children

Because children are still developing mentally and physically it's especially important that they get the proper vitamins and nutrients so that their bodies have all the tools they need for growth. When a child is growing and developing it can be hard for the child's body to keep up with the demand for vitamins and nutrients even if the child is eating a balanced diet.

It can be very difficult to get children to eat a balance diet. Children that have allergies to certain foods or just refuse to eat certain foods can develop vitamin deficiencies. Added to the extra need for vitamins that children's bodies have is the fact that most children don't get a balanced diet and don't get even the minimum amount of vitamins and minerals that they need for proper growth and development just from their diet alone.

Children that don't get enough vitamins and minerals can develop severe problems as a result. A lack of Vitamin A in a child's diet can cause the child to have poor vision or to have vision problems. Lack of other vitamins can cause symptoms like nausea, depression, lethargy, constipation, irritability, weight gain or loss, insomnia or other sleep disturbances, and poor mental development and physical coordination.

The Elderly

At the opposite end of the age spectrum are the elderly, who also need extra vitamins and minerals. Malnutrition

is the number one cause of vitamin deficiencies in the elderly. A lack of money for food or a lack of appetite because of the medications that they are on or depression or other health issues can all cause the elderly to become malnourished and to suffer from vitamin deficiencies.

When the elderly have serious vitamin deficiencies their immune systems can't function properly and they can end up developing serious infections and other illnesses that they would be able to fight off if they had a healthy immune system. The elderly also need vitamins and supplements to help them fight diseases and chronic conditions that become more of a problem as people age like arthritis.

BEAUTY BOOSTERS – VITAMINS AND SUPPLEMENTS FOR SKIN, HAIR AND NAILS

People, especially women, spend hundreds of thousands of dollars every year on creams, lotions, powders, makeup and other items to make their skin, hair and nails look beautiful. Truly beautiful skin, hair, and nails have to be healthy first. In order to get your skin, hair, and nails to be healthy and radiant you need to take vitamins.

Have you ever noticed that pregnant women seem to “glow?” That healthy glow is usually a result of the extra vitamins that pregnant women take to help their bodies deal with the increased demand for nutrition that is caused by the baby they are carrying. Those extra vitamins provide the nutrients that mother and baby need but also give a pregnant woman's skin, hair, and nail an additional boost of health too.

In the last few years some savvy beauty companies have realized this fact and have started marketing vitamins to women that are specifically designed to boost the health of your skin, hair and nails. These vitamins usually come in little pre-picked pouches so that you're getting just the right amounts of vitamins that you need, if you're eating a balanced diet everyday, to get that healthy glow in your own skin.

In some cultures certain herbs are taken in pill form every day or rubbed on the skin and hair in order to give the skin and hair a healthy appearance. While you might not think that ingredients that you keep in your kitchen for cooking every day like Turmeric or bananas can help you look more beautiful if you use them as beauty products instead of just to eat you can actually look younger and healthier. Using natural products and cooking grade quality ingredients in beauty products is one of the fastest growing trends in the beauty industry.

Vitamins that are used to give a youthful appearance and to make skin, hair and nails more beautiful can be taken orally like other daily vitamins or you can buy expensive creams, liquids and serums that are infused with vitamins and minerals to improve the look and texture of skin and to fight wrinkles and other signs of aging.

Using vitamins and herbs directly on the skin instead of taken internally can help the appearance of your skin but in order to really make changes in the structure of your skin and in the condition of your nail and nails you really need to make sure that you're eating a balanced diet, drinking enough water, and taking the right types of vitamins and supplements. In order to really have that healthy glow on your skin and hair you have to be really healthy. There are unfortunately no shortcuts to getting truly beautiful and healthy hair, skin and nails, but some vitamins and supplements really can help.

THE TOP 10 VITAMINS AND SUPPLEMENTS TO TAKE FOR HEALTHY SKIN, HAIR AND NAILS

So if you want to have naturally healthy and beautiful skin, hair and nails what vitamins and supplements should

you take? Just taking a normal multivitamin will help you look more beautiful because it will help your overall health. But there are some vitamins and supplements that you should take if you want to have the lustrous skin, hair and nails that pregnant women often have after taking pre-natal vitamins. Take these 10 vitamins and supplements and you'll have glowing and radiant skin, hair and nails in no time:

1. Vitamin A – Most people think that the only benefit of taking Vitamin A is to the eyes. Taking Vitamin A is necessary to maintain healthy eyes and good vision but Vitamin A is also great for the skin. Vitamin A helps keep your skin clear. It also helps the skin resist the formation of wrinkles and can give your skin a youthful look.

2. Vitamin B complex – Vitamin B complex is a group of eight different water soluble types of Vitamin B. All of these are Vitamin B types are necessary for health and to have great skin and hair. Vitamin B complex has been proven in scientific studies to help prevent thinning hair and to help clear up acne and other skin conditions. In fact, if your skin appears scaly and irritated it could mean that you have a Vitamin B complex deficiency.

3. Vitamin E – Vitamin E is a powerhouse vitamin when it comes to beauty. Pure Vitamin E used directly on the skin has a number of benefits for the skin. It softens skin without leaving a greasy residue. It is often used to treat itchy skin rashes and conditions like Eczema. Doctors often recommend using pure Vitamin E to help reduce the appearance of scars and other blemishes on the skin.

Vitamin E has also been used successfully to treat stretch marks. If you have some stretch marks from weight loss or pregnancy that you really want to get rid of skip the cocoa butter and go straight for the Vitamin E. Lotions and creams containing Vitamin E can cost \$75 or more, so get some pure Vitamin E capsules from the drugstore or health food store, open a capsule and apply that directly to your skin.

4. Vitamin C – You already know that Vitamin C is a great vitamin to take when you boost your immune system or avoid getting the flu that's going around but did you know it can help your skin look better too?

Vitamin C serum applied directly the skin can help get rid of free radicals and heal sun damage to the skin. However, Vitamin C becomes very unstable when exposed to the air instead of taken internally so if you are going to use a Vitamin C serum make sure that you use a stabilized Vitamin C serum that won't become oxidized by the light.

5. Selenium – Selenium is a mineral that is usually taken orally but is sometimes added to beauty and health care products. Selenium can help fight skin cancer and can improve the elasticity of skin, making it look younger. Selenium is also great for treating dandruff. Several of the leading commercial dandruff shampoos contain Selenium.

6. Zinc – Zinc is another mineral that is essential to staying healthy and having beautiful hair, nails and skin. Zinc is often used to help skin wounds heal and dermatologists use it to treat moderate to severe acne. Zinc cream can also help protect your skin from sun damage. Zinc is often found in fresh fruits and vegetables but can be taken as a stand alone supplement or applied in a cream.

7. Aloe Vera – Aloe Vera is an herb, not a vitamin, but can be applied to the skin directly or can be taken in a liquid form to help improve the appearance of skin, hair and nails. Aloe Vera is used often for treating sun burn and sun damage to the skin and treats a wide range of skin disorders. If you only keep one beauty supplement in your home it should be Aloe Vera.

8. Beta-Carotene – Beta-Carotene has been shown to help make nails stronger and shinier and less prone to breakage. It also encourages new hair growth and makes your existing hair shinier and less prone to break. Beta-Carotene is found in combination with other vitamins or can be purchased alone and taken as a daily supplement.

9. Turmeric – Turmeric is an herb, not a vitamin, but has been used for thousands of years to get beautiful skin and hair. In the East women often take a capsule of Turmeric daily to get beautiful skin and thick, shiny hair. You can also wash your face with a mixture of Turmeric and milk to soften skin and to fight acne, eczema, psoriasis and other skin conditions. Turmeric applied directly to the skin will also help stop the formation of wrinkles and creases in the skin. Washing your hair with Turmeric will make your hair shinier and less likely to break.

10. Folic Acid – Folic Acid is something that your body needs anyway, but a lack of Folic Acid can cause painful hang nails and other problems. One of the reasons why pregnant women have such luxurious fingernails is because pre-natal vitamins contain lots of Folic Acid to make up for the Folic Acid that is getting leeched from the woman's body by the baby for growth and development.

If you have problems with hang nails or if your nails break very easily and are brittle or have white bands across them try taking Folic Acid regularly, or take a multi-vitamin that contains extra Folic Acid and you should soon notice a distinct change in the condition of your fingernails.

ANTI-AGING VITAMINS

Vitamins and natural enzymes are very popular ingredients in anti-aging creams and lotions. Are they really effective? They are. Studies have shown over and over that certain types of vitamins and certain compounds can be very effective at fighting the signs of aging like dryness, discoloration, wrinkles, frown lines and sagging when used on a regular basis.

Most of the anti-aging vitamins that are considered to be the most effective are considered to be antioxidants. Antioxidants fight free radicals, which are the product of the oxidation process. Oxidation is a natural process that causes free radicals to build up in the body. Free radicals can break down your immune system and they can also make your skin look dull, saggy and discolored as they build up over time. Antioxidants destroy free radicals in the body and fight the signs of aging on your skin, which is why they are a key ingredient of many anti-aging creams and lotions.

In the past few years there has been a large increase in the number of skin care companies that are using natural vitamins and enzymes to combat aging. They know their customers are looking for better and more natural products and they know that such products can be very effective, even more effective than unnatural chemicals. Today's consumers are more aware of the effect of chemical compounds on their bodies and on the environment and consumers are demanding natural vitamin and plant based alternatives to the chemical based creams and lotions of the past.

ANTI AGING SUPPLEMENTS, CREAMS, LOTIONS AND SERUMS -

There are a lot of different anti-aging products on the market. Stand in front of the skin care aisle at your local drugstore and you could spend hours looking for just the right anti-aging product. If you go to a department store you can expect to pay hundreds of dollars for various anti-aging products. There are hundreds of choices when you're choosing an anti-aging skin care product and they come in several different forms that can be confusing to consumers that aren't familiar with the various types. When you're choosing an anti-aging skin care product you can choose from:

Creams

Creams are usually very thick and come in small tubs. Creams are thick because they are blends of vitamins, herbs and other products in a thick emollient. Creams can be heavy and if your skin is prone to breakouts creams can trigger a breakout because they are dense and somewhat oily.

Eye creams are similar to regular creams but they are made with ingredients that are safe to be around your eyes. They are also often lighter than regular creams and not as greasy as regular creams. When you are putting on eye cream don't put it directly on your eye lid, place a drop or two under your brow bone and the natural movement of your eye will disperse the cream.

Lotion

Lotions usually have the same base as creams but they are cut with more liquid, either purified water or mineral oil or sometimes sweet almond oil to make them thinner, easier to spread and less greasy. Lotions dry faster than creams and are usually recommended for daytime use because the lighter formula goes well under makeup. Lotions are good for people that have slightly oily skin because they won't make your face break out the way that creams can.

Lotions are usually a little bit less expensive than cream. In the beauty product spectrum lotions are the cheapest type of skin care items. These days you can buy tinted lotions that you can apply to your face that offer sun and wind protection, anti-aging vitamins, and a slight tint so that you look as if you're wearing makeup.

Serums

Serums are the most expensive items in the skin care world because usually they are the most concentrated. Serums are pure plant extract, vitamins, essential oils and other ingredients in a thin gel base. Serums are appropriate for all skin types and deliver the best bang for the buck.

Serums go on lightly and are absorbed into the skin quickly because of the light gel base. Because serums are so concentrated you need only a tiny amount to cover your whole face. Don't be put off if a tiny bottle of serum costs a lot of money. Since you need just a very small amount even a tiny bottle of serum will last longer than a larger bottle of cream or lotion.

Serums soak into your skin quickly and don't leave any kind of oily residue so they are perfect to use everyday under your makeup. A good anti-aging serum combined with a good sunscreen is all that most people need to keep their skin healthy and looking great but as you get older you might need to add a serum for mature skin to attack problems like dryness and age spots that only occur in mature skin.

You might have to experiment a little to find the best formula for your skin type but in general lotion is best for people with oily or acne prone skin. Creams are good for people that have dry skin and need extra moisture that will last. Serums are good for all skin types and are the most often recommended type of anti-aging product.

THE TOP 10 MOST EFFECTIVE ANTI-AGING VITAMINS AND ENZYMES

Everyone's skin is a little different, and each person's skin has been exposed to different chemicals, pollution and other factors that can make skin look unhealthy, dull or old. So there is no one vitamin or treatment that will make everyone's skin look radiant and young. But, if you want to try and add more vitamins to your diet to help your skin stay looking young and healthy these 10 are the best place to start.

1. CoQ10 – CoQ10 is the code name for Coenzyme Q10, an enzyme that the human body makes naturally. As you get older your body makes less and less of this enzyme, which is one of the reasons that people tend to have dull skin, wrinkles, and generally unhealthy looking skin.

CoQ10 is available as a supplement over the counter at any pharmacy or health food store. Taking daily doses of CoQ10 can help boost your body's production of CoQ10 which will make your skin look younger and healthier. CoQ10 also can be used in a cream or serum directly on the skin to help the appearance of the skin and to fight the formation of wrinkles.

2. Acetyl L Carnitine – Acetyl L Carnitine is a combination of amino acids that is naturally found in the body. Eating meat is a way to trigger the production of Acetyl L Carnitine so people who don't eat meat might find they are lacking Acetyl L Carnitine.

Acetyl L Carnitine gives support to the liver and helps flush the toxins out of soft tissue but its main job is transporting fat into the mitochondria of cells to be used as food and to carry away wastes. Without enough Acetyl L Carnitine your cells can become weak and unhealthy which will lead to the breakdown of your skin, hair and nails. In order to keep your cells looking young and healthy you need to get plenty of Acetyl L Carnitine. You can get Acetyl L Carnitine in non-prescription strength at any drugstore or health food store.

3. DHEA – DHEA is a short name for a hormone called Dehydroepiandrosterone. This hormone is found in the body up until around the late 20's, and the production begins to drop off around that age. As you get older your body produces less and less of it. Usually doctors recommend taking DHEA supplements for anyone that is elderly but these days lots of women who are under 40 are taking DHEA supplements to help protect their skin from wrinkles and to help heal sun damage.

DHEA fights aging by working to reverse the signs of aging and sun damage and has proven to be quite successful in tests. You can take DHEA supplements or you can use a cream that has DHEA in it. Skincare experts recommend both.

4. Carnosine - Like Acetyl L Carnitine Carnosine is a combination of amino acids that are produced by the body by are produced in smaller and smaller quantities as you age. Carnosine helps fight the signs of aging by flushing the toxins out of cells which rejuvenates them and makes them look younger. Carnosine can also extend the life of certain types of cells, which can increase the elasticity of your skin and fight the formation of wrinkles and creases that usually occur when you age.

Carnosine has other benefits to the body too. It can help fight allergies. Carnosine can also boost memory power and in some patients has been shown to help fight age related dementia. Carnosine has been proven in studies to effectively fight mental signs of aging and even fatigue. So taking Carnosine as you age can help with both the physical and the mental effects of aging on the body.

5. Fish Oil – Fish oil is a very popular dietary supplement that is used by millions of people everyday. Fish oil is a combination of different Omega 3 fatty acids that are found primarily in fish. These rich oils do wonderful things for the body including helping the heart stay healthy and helping to calm the symptoms of ADHD. But fish oil also helps your body fight the signs of aging.

Taking fish oil capsules regularly or using creams and lotions and serums that contain fish oil can help prevent sun damage to your skin, restore elasticity, fight adult acne, and improve the overall tone of your skin. Fish oil supplements also strengthen your nails and make your hair shinier and less brittle after you've been taking them for about a week.

6. Anti-Oxidants – There are many different kinds of anti-oxidants that help you fight the signs of aging but they all really do the same thing, fight free radical damage. Free radicals are cells that have lost a vital component and are not anchored within the body so they bounce around trying to steal the component they need from other cells. They can destroy cells and cause a breakdown in the skin and other vital organs.

Anti-oxidants fight free radicals by sharing with the free radical the component that it's missing. Then the free radical is bound to the anti-oxidant and is harmless to other cells. Anti-oxidants have been proven to protect skin from sun damage and to give skin a much more youthful appearance through the destruction of free radicals.

Many skin care and anti-aging creams have anti-oxidants in them so even if you don't want to spend hundreds of dollars on a fancy anti-aging cream you can find a decent quality skin care cream or lotion that has anti-oxidants in it to fight free radical damage.

7. Green Tea Extract - Green tea extract is a liquid that is made from decaffeinated green tea. Green tea extract has been used in Chinese medicine and other herbal medicine systems for thousands of years to treat a wide variety of illnesses. But green tea extract can also do great things to help your skin.

Green tea extract has shown in scientific studies to slow down damage from the sun and to protect skin from the UVA rays of the sun. Green tea extract also helps fight the appearance of wrinkles and sagging skin. It is a powerful anti-oxidant that can help keep your skin looking young. If you are prone to adult acne or you want to cover up old acne scars green tea extract applied directly to the skin can help stop inflammation and reduce the size of old scars.

Green tea extract is just now becoming popular in the Western market as an anti-aging treatment so more and more skin care products are starting to add green tea extract to their formulations. If you want to get the biggest bang for your buck you can buy green tea extract liquid supplements and apply them directly to your skin.

8. Lipoic Acid – Lipoic acid is another substance that is already found in the body but the body produces less and less of as it ages. You can get lipoic acid from foods but the best source is an over the counter daily dietary supplement. Or you can find Lipoic acid in high end skin care creams and anti-wrinkle creams.

Lipoic acid can help get rid of toxic metals in the body and can help fight memory loss and age related dementia. When it comes to helping the skin look younger Lipoic acid is a real powerhouse. One study found that fine wrinkles disappeared entirely after treatment using a cream containing Lipoic acid and that bigger wrinkles disappeared by 50 percent.

9. Retinol – Retinol is the purest form of Vitamin A and has become a standard anti-aging weapon. Retinol is commonly used to treat people who suffer from acne because it exfoliates, cleanses and protects the skin from pollution, bacteria and other harmful irritants. Retinol is often used in chemical peels and laser peels that remove layers of the skin to reveal younger, fresher looking skin that lies beneath dull, dry layers of skin. If you want to use a skin care cream that will really help you look younger choose one that has Retinol in it.

10. Vitamin E – In addition to helping your skin look healthier in general, Vitamin E is a great supplement to use if you want to look younger. Vitamin E is often used as a base in skin care products because it has a lot of benefits for skin and can be applied to the skin without clogging pores. A typical anti-aging serum might be a



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