



WOMEN WELLNESS: NUTRITION FOR THE BEST YOU

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“Mirror, mirror, on the wall – who is the fairest of them all?” This well-known saying from Snow White seems very applicable to our everyday lives. Women, in general, seem to be their own biggest critic, comparing and analysing ourselves, no wonder there are so many beauty products available. From collagen drinks to 24K gold face masks, how do we know what works and what’s a FAD? Hopefully after reading this you will have some answers about those nutrients that are really proven to assist.

BEAUTY FROM WITHIN

In 2013, a report showed that women collectively spend \$426 billion on beauty products each year and that the average woman spends \$15,000 on beauty products over the course of her lifetime, this is just over R200 000¹. With so many platforms to gain information it’s a cumbersome process to know what is really reliable and accurate as many articles will have conflicting information and views.

We aim for glowing skin, strong nails and glossy hair, these may all be signs of a great beauty regime but following a healthy lifestyle should never be underestimated. Many nutrients found in food are well proven to act as “beauty nutrients” having had positive effects for thousands of years, think rooibos, avocados, olive oil, flaxseeds and honey.

Below is a list of nutrients that have a substantial effect on women’s wellness. The general rule is food first, a well-planned balanced diet should provide all the nutrients that you need, making supplements unnecessary. If for some reason you are unable to reach your requirements through diet and you are diagnosed with a deficiency it may become necessary to supplement. Something important to remember is that the law does not require companies to prove the safety of their dietary supplements before they are marketed and that most claims made in the labelling of the products don’t have to be proved true by the manufacturer or seller².

1. Vitamin A

Vitamin A is a powerful antioxidant, therefore playing a crucial role in maintaining healthy vision, neurological function and healthy skin, it helps build strong bones, facilitates cell differentiation and supports our immune function³. Some of the best sources are eggs, liver, milk, carrots, yellow/orange vegetables like carrot, squash and butternut as well as leafy green vegetables such as spinach⁴.



2. Vitamin C

Vitamin C is important for the growth and repair of tissues in the entire body. It helps to produce collagen, an important protein in the skin, cartilage, tendon, ligaments and blood vessels, it helps with wound healing and to maintain teeth and bones. Due to its abilities to produce collagen Vitamin C helps to improve the appearance of skin and reduces wrinkles⁵. Excellent sources include fruits such as oranges, grapefruit, kiwi and strawberries⁴.

3. Iron

Iron plays many roles in the body, it helps transport oxygen and forms an essential element for blood production. Low levels of iron may result in tiredness, pale skin and brittle nails, therefore we want to ensure that we are consuming foods that are rich sources of iron, these include red meat (the redder the meat, the more iron it contains), liver, egg yolks and tuna⁽⁴⁾. Plant sources are also great but these are harder for our bodies to absorb.

4. Biotin

B-complex vitamins, of which biotin forms a part, play many roles in our bodies, they are needed for healthy nails, skin, eyes and the liver, they help the nervous system to function properly and help provide us with energy⁴. Good sources of biotin include organ meats (liver, kidneys), yeast, egg yolks, soybeans, nuts and certain cereals.

5. Omega-3

Omega-3 Fatty Acids are important as they fuel our brains, balance hormones, reduce inflammation and repair tissue⁴. We have all heard how Omega's help with heart health, joints and eye health but the effect it has on skin and nails hasn't commonly been mentioned. The anti-inflammatory properties help support healthy skin and for our hair Omega-3 helps to nourish the follicles. The American Heart Association recommends 2 serving of fish ($\pm 90g$) per week. Great dietary sources of Omega-3 include fish (salmon, sardines and mackerel), egg yolks and certain nuts (walnuts) and seeds⁶.

6. Zinc

Zinc is an essential mineral that is found in almost every cell, it plays an imperative part of many physiological functions, it helps with wound healing, supports immunity, maintains our sense of taste and smell, regulates gene expression, plays a role in protein synthesis, DNA synthesis and cell division. Zinc keeps our skin looking healthy, has anti-inflammatory properties and protects against UV radiation⁴. The best sources of zinc include organ meats (liver, kidney), red meat (beef, lamb) and seafood (scallops, shellfish and oysters)³. Animal sources are more bioavailable which means our bodies better absorb and utilize those sources versus our plant sources.



CONCLUSION

Overall health and wellness not only affects what happens inside our bodies but also what is seen on the outside. We therefore need to aim to eat a healthy, balanced diet to ensure our ideal body weight is achieved, this will help make us feel and look fantastic. For the best skin, hair and nails we need to eat plenty of fruits and vegetables (rich in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants), protein sources (rich in biotin, iron and zinc) and try have fish/seafood x2 per week (Omega-3). Drinking plenty of water, exercising and ensuring we get enough sleep will also help us on our anti-aging journey. No need for expensive supplements, invasive beauty regimes and crash diets, following a healthy lifestyle will give you the best results, guaranteed.

FUTURELIFE® has a vast range of products which caters for everyone. FUTURELIFE® products are also high in Energy, Protein and Dietary Fibre, they contain Calcium, Iron, Selenium, Zinc, essential vitamins and minerals, 19 Amino Acids and Omega 3+6, ring a bell?? Most of these nutrients were discussed above, therefore choosing a product has never been easier!

REFERENCES

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