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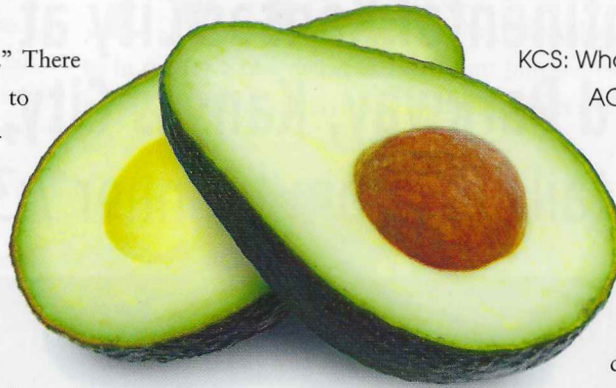


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Eating for Beauty

By contributing writer Melanie Knopke

“**Y**ou are what you eat.” There may be some truth to that statement, especially when it comes to the health of your skin. Amanda Chaney, founder of Chaney Integrative Family Medicine, reveals that you should look to your gut when it comes to skin issues.



KCS: How does diet play into the look and feel of our skin?

Amanda Chaney: In the realm of beauty, skincare and dietary wellness are a top priority. If you don't take care of yourself from the inside out, no makeup or skincare products will matter. The bottom line for skin beauty is to eat as well as you can and be sure you are absorbing and eliminating your food well. We are going to be exposed to toxins through our diet but we want to make sure they are not building up in our skin causing age spots, puckering due to dehydration and various skin disorders.

KCS: What skin problems have you helped patients with?

AC: Many women deal with the much dreaded melasma, aka hyperpigmentation.

I personally struggled with melasma after the birth of my first child. Lathering on the sunscreen helps prevent it. But the thing that people don't know about melasma is that it can be caused by a folate or folic acid deficiency. Low levels of this B vitamin can occur in women who are pregnant, on birth control or have an inadequate diet. Foods high in folate include citrus fruits, nuts, green leafy vegetables and whole grains.

I also suggest my patients balance the levels of copper in their diet. Copper promotes melanin production in the skin and high levels can cause excess pigmentation. To reduce copper levels, eat foods that are high in vitamin C and iron. Vitamin C helps repair sun damage that can cause melasma. These vitamins are found in citrus fruits, kiwis, nuts, almonds, brightly colored vegetables and fish.

KCS: What are the worst foods for skin issues?

AC: Dairy. Your skin acts as an excretory system to get rid of things that your body is not in agreement with, so when you get too much dairy, it comes out in the form of blemishes in the lower area of the face.

Caffeinated drinks. They cause dehydration and will deplete your skin of its vital nutrients. When skin is dehydrated and dry, its natural elasticity and collagen are affected, causing it to become more prone to sagging and wrinkles. This doesn't mean you can't treat yourself, just make sure to drink the recommended water intake to keep your body and skin hydrated. My general rule of thumb for water intake is to take your current weight, divide it by two and that amount in ounces is your daily water intake goal.

A diet without LIVE foods. Not including foods like salads, which have magnesium—a natural detoxifier—can cause lack-luster skin and hair. Salads, raw juicing and raw foods do the opposite by giving your skin a natural glow.

KCS: What are certain foods we should incorporate into our diet and why?

AC: Avocados. Rich, creamy and packed with good-for-you monounsaturated fats, avocados are the ultimate get-gorgeous food. Avocados contain antioxidants, fiber, potassium, magnesium and folate. One avocado is packed with more potassium than a medium banana—almost 900 grams!

Almonds. A great source of satisfying fiber and protein, almond nut butter can help keep your body lean and trim when incorporated into a healthy diet. The vitamin E in almonds and almond butter can also help protect your skin from damaging UV rays.

Seaweed. It contains nutrients such as iron, manganese, iodine, copper, zinc, omega-3 fatty acids and selenium. Seaweed can aid circulation and help you attain gorgeous, smooth legs and supple skin.

Eat organic as much as possible, get your daily dose of fruits and veggies and the biggest beauty secret of them all: drink lots of water and sleep, sleep, sleep.