

# **A Natural Approach to Beautiful Skin**

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Our skin is the outer us, it's what the world sees of us. It protects us from the outer world and forms a barrier between inside and outside. It radiates our health and indicates when we are stressed or tired. It is the means by which we interact with the world. We often take our skin for granted and only take notice of it when it calls for special attention or when the experiences we have lived begin to show up in the lines on our face and the healthy, youthful glow begins to fade.

When our skin needs special attention, we need to treat it with the utmost care and gentleness, just as we would treat any illness, injury or imbalance in our bodies. Equally important, however, is the lifelong, daily care we give our skin. We need to carefully nourish and care for our skin everyday, especially the face and neck, adjusting our routine according to the season, our age, and the particular needs of our skin. Daily attention and nourishment optimize skin health, aid in preventing skin damage, and keep skin youthful and beautiful.

## **What Does Our Skin Do?**

The skin is actually the body's largest organ, and just as the heart, lungs, and stomach each have their role in the overall functioning of the body, the skin also has its own unique purpose and tasks that it does to keep the body healthy. Each organ and each physiological system functions differently, but they all work synergistically to keep the body in top condition. All together they keep us feeling good, working, playing, and smiling.

The skin contributes in various ways to keeping the body healthy and fully functioning. Foremost our skin protects the body from the surrounding environment: it forms a barrier between the world and our internal organs, fighting germs and preventing pollutants from entering. Our skin also regulates our body temperature by modifying itself to prevent heat loss or sweating to cool the body. Sensory cells in the skin provide us with information about our surroundings. Perhaps most importantly, the skin also serves as an excretory organ, eliminating toxins and releasing moisture and carbon dioxide. Your skin is a living, breathing organ that serves you well and needs to be treated well to function properly and stay beautiful.

## **Skin Structure**

The skin consists of three main layers, each slightly different and each important. The deepest layer, the subcutaneous tissue, contains the fat cells that help hold in heat, serve as padding to protect underlying organs, and provide the body with energy when needed.

The middle layer of the skin, the dermis, is full of nerve endings to provide our brain with information about the outside world, blood vessels to nourish the skin, sweat glands, hair follicles, and sebaceous glands that produce sebum, the oil substance that lubricates and waterproofs our skin. This layer provides the skin structure that we see on the outside. Two proteins in this layer, collagen and elastin, form a structural lattice that gives our skin elasticity, tone, and flexibility. When this protein structure is damaged or begins to break down, lines, wrinkles, and a loss of skin tone show up on our faces.

The last and uppermost layer of the skin, the layer we see, is called the epidermis. The epidermis is actually formed by various layers of skin cells; the cells form at the basal or bottom layer of the epidermis and slowly migrate towards the surface where they are shed. This process takes approximately 28 days meaning that the skin that we see is constantly being renewed and reformed. This layer of skin is covered by a slightly acidic mixture of sweat, sebum, and keratin (a protein produced by mature skin cells) which, with the help of immune cells, protects the body from microbes and pollutants in the external environment.

The lower levels of the epidermis contain the pigment cells that help protect our skin from sun damage and determine our skin color. Our skin is much more complex than we can imagine by simply looking at the outside and very susceptible to damage due to the sun, harsh environmental conditions, and a poor diet. Now that we understand a bit better what our skin is and what it does, we can see the importance of caring for our skin, for our health both inside and outside, to look good and feel good. After all, healthiness is beauty, and healthiness begins on the inside.

## **Skin Care Basics**

Healthy skin begins with a healthy body: it begins with lifestyle. For healthy, beautiful skin, we need to feed our bodies nutritious foods and limit our intake of refined sugars, flours and other harmful substances such as caffeine and alcohol. Smoking is especially harmful

to the skin on the face because it produces a large quantity of free radicals that damage the skin. We need to stay hydrated from the inside out, drinking a full eight to ten glasses of fresh, pure water everyday. Regular exercise benefits the skin by increasing the blood and nutrient flow to all parts of the body including the skin and aids in eliminating toxins as the body sweats. And of course, we need to get plenty of rest.

Taking care of your body is the first step to beautiful skin, but a healthy lifestyle alone is not enough. We need to establish a daily skin care routine, beginning in the teenage years and continuing through our lives, to actually care for our skin properly and maintain its beautiful healthy radiance.

The four steps to healthy, beautiful skin are cleansing, toning, moisturizing, and exfoliating. For the face and neck, cleansing, toning, and moisturizing should be done twice daily, morning and night. Exfoliating needs to be done at least once a week. Our bodies and our skin are as unique as our personalities and so will have different needs. The exact routine that you create and the products you choose to use will depend on your skin and what makes you feel the best. We will give you our recommendations, but experiment. Listen to your body; listen to your skin. Try various products and observe your skin. With time you will understand what your skin needs and likes.

## **Cleansing**

The first step in taking care of your skin and the basis of your skin care routine is cleansing. During the day, and to a lesser extent while we sleep, dirt, sweat, sebum and other impurities build up on our skin. Some impurities are deposited on our skin from the external environment; some, the skin secretes. These debris, including makeup, clog the pores and prevent the skin from breathing and from eliminating toxins. Failure to remove the debris and dirt causes skin irritations, blemishes and blackheads. The skin needs to be kept free of dirt and debris so that it can continue to eliminate toxins and waste from the body.

Your cleanser should remove dirt and impurities without disturbing the natural balance of the skin. Always use a non-soap cleanser on the face and neck that removes dirt without stripping the skin of its natural oils and moisture (remember that the natural moisture protects the skin). After cleansing, your face should feel clean and fresh, not tight, dry, or pulled. Remember to pay attention to your

skin. If your cleanser does not leave your face feeling clean and wonderful, choose a different cleanser. Additionally, the gentle, mechanical motion of cleansing stimulates blood flow, bringing nutrients and oxygen to the skin, and encourages the lymphatic flow.

## **Toning**

The next step in your twice-daily skin care routine is toning. Always choose a non-alcohol, pH balanced toner that uses natural astringents such as witch hazel. Alcohol is extremely drying. Toners remove any finer debris or impurities that cleansing left behind, including residues of the cleanser itself. With a cotton ball or pad, gently apply toner with upward strokes. Once again, the extra mechanical rubbing helps remove even more waste products and continues to stimulate the blood flow. Toning helps restore the pH balance of the skin and refine the appearance of the pores. In the summer, toning midday can be extremely refreshing and help remove the extra oil produced by the skin. By cleansing and toning we have removed all impurities and prepared the skin for nourishment and hydration.

## **Moisturizing**

To complete our morning and nightly routine, we need to moisturize after toning. All skin types require moisturizing. Moisturizers serve to replenish the moisture lost to the environment, deliver megadoses of skin specific nutrients, and seal the surface of the skin to prevent moisture loss and protect the skin from foreign pathogens and environmental influences. The waterproof lipid barrier that protects our skin and helps to retain moisture breaks down due to both environmental conditions and the natural aging process. When we moisturize, we rehydrate the skin and help restore the lipid barrier. Moisturizing is also an opportunity to deliver potent vitamins, antioxidants, and botanicals directly to the skin to optimize skin health.

As mentioned previously, a healthy diet is essential for healthy skin. However, recent research now shows that topical application quickly and effectively delivers essential antioxidants to the skin cells. Using a moisturizer containing nourishing vitamins and herbs ensures that the skin receives more skin-specific nutrients than can be obtained from diet alone. In order for your moisturizer to actually nourish the skin, it must contain therapeutic concentrations of vitamins, antioxidants, and botanicals. All derma e® moisturizers are formulated with high concentrations to truly nourish your skin.

Remember to choose a moisturizer appropriate for your skin. Serums are water-based moisturizers and tend to be better for more oily skin whereas crèmes are oil based and tend to be better for drier skin. Day crèmes tend to be lighter than night crèmes. Lotions are thinner and more appropriate to moisturize the body; the neck, face, and hands need richer formulations because they are constantly exposed. After moisturizing, your skin should feel soft and supple, never oily or dry.

## **Exfoliation**

The last component of our skin care routine is the deep-cleansing exfoliation. All skin types should be exfoliated at least once a week, though some may benefit from more frequent exfoliation. Exfoliation helps to remove the build-up of dead cells and waste from the surface of the skin, unclog pores, and stimulate cellular renewal, leaving behind the new, healthier cells and allowing the skin to function optimally. Abrasive exfoliants such as microdermabrasion treatments or scrubs mechanically remove the dead cells and debris.

For proper exfoliation, rub the exfoliant on the face and neck for a full two minutes, thoroughly but not forcefully. Exfoliation should not be painful. Alpha Hydroxy Acids and Glycolic Acids are non-abrasive exfoliants that encourage the removal of the dead cells via a biochemical reaction. If your skin shows signs of over-exfoliation, such as irritation, decrease the time spent exfoliating or the time between exfoliating treatments. Regular exfoliation will restore and maintain a healthy radiance as well as diminishing the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles.

## **Sun Care**

Overexposure to the sun is the most common cause of skin damage, premature aging, and skin cancer. Protecting your skin from the sun is essential for maintaining healthy, youthful skin. At derma e® we focus on the power of antioxidants to protect skin from UV-induced free radicals. Topical application of antioxidants has been shown to decrease the harmful effects of exposure to UV rays and other environmental influences. Astaxanthin, Pycnogenol®, Green Tea, vitamin C and vitamin E have all been shown to provide some degree of protection against free radical damage.

A healthy diet including a varied selection of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables as well as an antioxidant supplement will increase your

body's ability to protect itself from free radical attack and sun damage. Reducing your exposure to the sun is truly the best defense against sun damage. When you are in the sun, wear protective clothing (a hat, long sleeves), and if you are going to be in the sun for an extended period of time, wear sunscreen.

We believe in healthy skin and that the effects of long-term, everyday usage of sunscreen should be studied more thoroughly. When necessary, use a sunscreen, but supply your skin with an ample amount of antioxidants daily. You can do this by eating antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables, taking an antioxidant supplement, and using antioxidant-rich skin care products.

### **Ingredients to Avoid**

Part of caring for your skin is carefully choosing what you put on your skin. Remember to avoid products that contain potentially harmful ingredients. Many companies use parabens as preservatives, but recent research suggests that parabens may be harmful. Two other common skin care ingredients, mineral oil and lanolin, may clog the pores, preventing the skin from functioning properly and leading to blemishes. Petrolatum is another ingredient that tends to clog pores. Avoid products that contain these harmful ingredients: we want to leave our skin clean, soft, healthy, and beautiful.

### **Beautiful Skin...Naturally**

Beautiful, radiant skin is a choice. Choose a lifestyle that nourishes your body with healthy foods, plenty of water, and exercise. Give your skin the care that it needs: cleanse, tone, and moisturize twice daily and exfoliate weekly. Choose products that deliver skin-specific vitamins, nutrients, and antioxidants. Choose youthful, beautiful, healthy skin and enjoy!!

For more specific information pertaining to your skin type, please see ["Skin Types"](#).