



SMART BODY

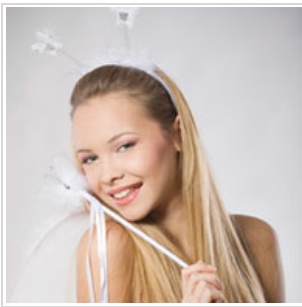
HEALTHY LIVING

LIVING BEAUTIFUL

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## Miracle Foods For Healthy Skin

By: **Kate Parham**

Does beauty truly come from within?

No, we're not talking about what a good person you are (though, we're sure you're delightful!); rather, does what we eat really affect our skin? Are those potato chips causing your acne? Will eating fresh fruits and veggies prevent wrinkles?

It's a controversial topic in medicine, one with conflicting evidence and opinions. But Dr. Jessica Wu, author of the new book *Feed Your Face: Younger, Smoother Skin and a Beautiful Body in 28*

*Delicious Days*, is convinced: "Despite what most doctors tell their patients, I believe that what we eat does affect our skin."

Dr. Wu came to this conclusion after monitoring and analyzing her patient's food choices for more than 15 years at her dermatology practice. "The science clearly shows many instances in which food choices are linked to conditions like acne, rashes and sun damage," says Dr. Wu.

Dawn Gallagher, model, TV host and author of the new book *Nature's Beauty Secrets: Recipes for Beauty Treatments from the World's Best Spas*, agrees. "In order to keep your skin looking healthy, you need to maintain a diet that is well-balanced nutritionally," says Gallagher. Poor nutrition can negatively affect the skin's ability to renew and heal itself, but improved diet often results in younger looking skin, possibly even partially reversing the signs of aging, says Gallagher.

Gallagher goes on to say, "Skin care products are a lot less likely to be effective if your skin is lacking in the essential nutrients." So even if you're using the right products, it may not make a difference if your diet is lacking.

Just as both diet and exercise are important for maintaining a healthy body weight, both nutrition and products are important for achieving healthy skin. "Some people respond more quickly to prescription medications, while others respond better to a change in their diet," explains Dr. Wu, who sends most of her patients home with a "prescription" for the right foods AND the right products.

### Eat This

If you want hydrated, firm, radiant skin, sans acne, wrinkles and rashes, eat a diet high in these nutrients:

- **Vitamin A:** Without Vitamin A, our skin turns dry, itchy and it loses its elasticity.
  - **Prescription:** Eat carrots, spinach, broccoli, melons and apricots, says Gallagher.
- **Zinc:** Working with Vitamin A to produce collagen and elastin, the fibers in Zinc give your skin its firmness and strength, says Gallagher. Plus, studies show it may be even better at treating acne than antibiotics.
  - **Prescription:** Eat beans, whole grains, nuts and fortified breakfast cereals.
- **Vitamin C:** To keep your skin firm, eat a diet high in Vitamin C.
  - **Prescription:** Eat citrus fruits, cabbage, strawberries, watermelon and tomatoes.
- **Vitamin E:** An antioxidant, Vitamin E neutralizes free radicals that cause aging.

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- **Prescription:** Eat almonds, hazelnuts and wheat germ.
- **Lycopene:** This antioxidant has been shown to protect against sun damage, says Gallagher, and to improve fine lines, hydration, elasticity and radiance.
  - **Prescription:** Eat tomatoes, which are high in lycopene.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids:** These anti-inflammatory nutrients help calm rashes, itchy skin and acne, actually reversing damage and decreasing hormones associated with increased oil production (read: clogged pores)
  - **Prescription:** Eat oily fish, like salmon, sardines and trout, at least twice a week.
- **Silicon:** Silicon helps hair and nails grow longer, thicker and healthier
  - **Prescription:** Eat green beans, whole grains, lentils and spinach.

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## Kate Parham

Kate Parham is a Washington D.C.-based freelance writer who reports on health, consumer finance and lifestyle topics. Her work has been published in dozens of consumer magazines and online including USA Today, Real Simple, Self, Cooking Light and countless others.

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