

## Beauty Buzz



### skin vitamins

Of all the news coming from the beauty community, the loudest buzz may be about the power of vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients to give skin a more radiant, healthy, and youthful glow.

The excitement is focused not only on creams and lotions that you put on your skin but what you put into your body as well. Health experts say that vitamins and minerals in all forms play an integral role in a healthy complexion, whether the source is food or supplements.

“Your skin is the fingerprint of what is going on inside your body, and all skin conditions, from psoriasis to acne to aging, are the manifestations of your body’s internal needs, including its nutritional needs,” says Georgiana Donadio, PhD, DC, MSc, founder and director of the National Institute of *Whole Health* in Boston.

If you feed your skin from the inside and out, experts say you can’t help but benefit. You’re skin is a visceral representation of your health.

“There is a lot of important new research showing tremendous power of antioxidants in general, and in some specific nutrients in particular that can make an important difference in the way your skin looks and feels — and even in how well it ages,” says nutritional supplement expert Mary Sullivan, RN, co-founder of *Olympian Labs*. “When combined with a good diet, the right dietary supplements can help keep your skin looking not only healthy, but also years younger.”

So which nutrients do you need to keep your skin healthy and looking its best? According to the experts interviewed by Web MD, plus new information from the American Academy of Dermatology (AAD), the following vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and other nutrients nourish your skin, whether you take them in supplement form, apply them directly to you skin, or make sure you get enough from the foods you eat.

### Vitamins Good for Skin Nutrition

Studies show that the vitamins **C**, **E**, **A**, **K**, and **B complex** all help improve skin health and appearance. Here’s how.

**Vitamin C.** Among the most important new dermatologic discoveries is the power of vitamin C to counter the effects of sun exposure. It works by reducing the damage caused by free radicals, a harmful byproduct of sunlight, smoke, and pollution. Free radicals gobble up collagen and elastin, the fibers that support skin structure, causing wrinkles and other signs of aging.

Make sure your diet includes plenty of vitamin-C rich foods (citrus and vegetables, among others), which can replace the loss of the vitamin through the skin. You can also take vitamin C supplements, up to 500 to 1,000 milligrams of per day, according to the AAD. Combined with vitamin E (see below), vitamin C supplements can also protect skin from sun exposure.

You can also try a topical vitamin C cream to encourage collagen production, just as your body does naturally when you are young. The trick here is to use a formulation containing the L-ascorbic acid form of vitamin C, the only one that can penetrate skin layers and do the job.

**Vitamin E.** Research shows that, like vitamin C, this potent antioxidant helps reduce the harmful effects of the sun on the skin. According to studies published by the AAD, taking 400 units of vitamin E daily appeared to reduce the risk of sun damage to cells as well as reduce the production of cancer-causing cells. Some studies show that when vitamins E and A are taken together, people show a 70% reduction in basal cell carcinoma, a common form of skin cancer.

Vitamin E can also help reduce wrinkles and make your skin look and feel smoother. (Be aware, though, that some recent research warns that large doses of vitamin E can be harmful. Stay with 400 international units per day or less to be on the safe side.) Used in a cream, lotion, or serum form, vitamin E can soothe dry, rough skin. When combined with vitamin C in a lotion, it's highly protective against sun damage, says the AAD.

If your **vitamin A** levels are up to snuff from the foods you eat, adding more probably won't do much more for your skin. That said, if those levels drop even a little below normal, you're likely to see some skin-related symptoms, including a dry, flaky complexion. That's because vitamin A is necessary for the maintenance and repair of skin tissue. Without it, you'll notice the difference. Fruits and vegetables are loaded with vitamin A.

Topical vitamin A is the form that makes a real difference in your skin. Medical studies show a reduction in lines and wrinkles, good acne control, and some psoriasis relief, all from using creams containing this nutrient. The prescription treatment is called Retin A, and it's used primarily as a treatment for acne. The less potent, over-the-counter formulations are sold as retinols and used as anti-aging treatments.