

# Healthy Skin Hair and Nails Naturally



by Ronald Steriti, NMD, PhD

## **About this booklet**

This booklet was written as a handy guide for people that want to improve their skin, hair and nails.

## **About the Author**

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Dr. Steriti advocates freedom of choice in health care and assists people in making informed decisions about natural health throughout the United States and Canada.

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# Oils for Healthy Skin

## Essential fatty acids

Aging causes a progressive decline in our ability to internally synthesize the essential fatty acids that keep our skin smooth and youthful. The most important oils are the omega-3's found in flax and borage oils which are found in the refrigerator of your local health food store.

## Evening primrose oil

Evening primrose oil contains gamma-linolenic acid, an essential fatty acid that is approved in Great Britain for treating eczema.

## Almond oil

Almond oil was once used for anointing kings and priests. It is an emollient and massage it into your skin to slow wrinkling.

## Olive oil

Since biblical times, olive oil has been used to soften and beautify the skin.

## Cocoa butter

Cocoa butter is used in many skin lotions and cosmetics and is highly recommended to prevent wrinkles. It melts at body temperature and moistens dry skin, especially around the eyes (crow's-feet), the corners of the mouth and on the neck (turkey neck).

# Nutrition

## Vitamin C

Vitamin C is required for collagen synthesis, which declines markedly in aging skin. Vitamin C also regenerates vitamin E and enables it to provide sustained antioxidant protection in the skin's elastin fibers.

## Antioxidants

Vitamins A, C and E are antioxidants that enhance skin cell turnover and collagen synthesis. When applied topically these vitamins protect against premature skin aging from the damaging effects of ultraviolet light and environmental pollutants.

## Biotin

Biotin, a B complex vitamin, has been shown in several studies to improve firmness, hardness, and thickness in test subjects with frailty and brittleness of the fingernails.

## Zinc

Zinc plays a critical role in the synthesis of RNA and DNA which is needed for cell division, growth and development. The inability to absorb adequate amounts of zinc has been linked to several skin and hair disorders including alopecia (hair loss), dermatitis, and dystrophy of the nails.

# **Nutrition**

## **Cysteine**

Hair and fingernails are composed of a protein called keratin which is woven together by the sulfur-containing amino acid cysteine. The most common form of cysteine is N-Acetyl-Cysteine, which is also used to relieve excess mucous found in conditions such as bronchitis.

## **Silica**

Silica is an important mineral that is a building block of hair and nails.

## **Horsetail**

Horsetail contains the minerals selenium and silicon which help promote circulation to the scalp and provide building blocks for new hair. Try adding a pinch of dried horsetail to your herbal tea.

## **Protein**

Hair and nails are made from the amino acid building blocks found in protein.

## **Hydrochloric acid and pepsin**

Hydrochloric acid and pepsin are important for breaking down proteins and absorbing minerals.

# Healthy Skin

Fruits and vegetables are both tasty and nutritious and have a very long history as beauty aids. Often they are mashed into a pulp and applied directly on the skin in the form of a natural facial,

## **Cucumber**

Cucumber has a long folk history of use for cooling burns and treating wrinkles. Simply peel and crush some cucumbers in a blender and apply directly to the affected area. Cucumber slices can also be placed over the eyelids.

## **Carrot**

Carrots are high in beta carotene which the body converts into vitamin A. A deficiency of this vitamin can cause dry skin and wrinkling. Carrots also contain the antioxidant beta-carotene and many other cancer-preventing compounds.

## **Purslane**

Like carrots, purslane is rich in carotenoids. This herb can be used to make an invigorating face mask with healing properties.

# Healthy Skin

## **Pineapple**

Pineapples contain fruit acids called alpha-hydroxy acids that peel off dead skin cells by dissolving the substances that hold the dead skin together. These are used in face peels to treat acne, chapped skin, fine lines, and wrinkles.

## **Avocado**

The oils in avocados are patented as a treatment for some forms of dermatitis and arthritis. Avocado oil is rich in vitamins A, D and E, all of which help maintain healthy skin.

## **Grapes**

Grapes contain alpha-hydroxy acids, the substances that help peel dead skin cells from the face. Grapes can be mashed in a juicer and applied as a natural facial mask.

## **Papaya**

Papaya's enzymes help remove wrinkles when applied topically and can aid in digesting food when eaten.

## **Foods rich in nucleic acids**

Foods rich in nucleic acids (RNA) such as sardines, salmon, tuna, shell fish, lentils, and beans may be helpful for skin problems.

# Healthy Skin

## **Aloe vera juice**

Aloe was used by Egyptian pharaohs to treat many skin problems. Aloe vera gel has been used to heal radiation burns since the 1930s.

## **Chamomile**

Chamomile is a tasty tea approved in Europe for treatment of inflammatory skin conditions, notably yeast infections. Compounds in chamomile (bisabolol, chamazulene and cyclic ethers) are antiinflammatory, bactericidal and fungicidal. Chamomile can also be brewed and used as a compress.

## **Calendula**

Calendula flowers are one of the best herbs for skin problems. Research shows that this herb is antibacterial, antifungal, antiinflammatory and antiviral. Calendula also stimulates white blood cells to help speed wound healing. Calendula flowers can be used to make a tea.

## **Ginkgo**

Research shows that ginkgo biloba extract signals fibroblast activity in the skin to increase the synthesis of collagen, while serving as an antiinflammatory agent.

## **Gotu kola**

Gotu kola is an Indian herb that stimulates the regeneration of skin cells and underlying connective tissue.



# Healthy Skin

## **Alpha glycolic acid**

Alpha glycolic acid is the most potent of the alpha-hydroxy acids that have been shown to erase fine wrinkles in aging human skin. Alpha-glycolic acid breaks down old surface skin cells so they can be replaced with more youthful cells underneath.

## **DHEA and Melatonin**

The sleep hormone melatonin and the anti-stress hormone DHEA are both found in human skin. DHEA is converted into estrogen and androgen-type metabolites found only in skin.

## **Menopause**

Dry skin can be caused by decreased estrogens associated with menopause. Estrogen's skin-enhancing effects are well-known. It provokes collagen and a moisture factor known as hyaluronic acid. Aging decreases both estrogen and collagen.

## **Hypothyroidism**

The body converts beta carotene into vitamin A which is needed for healthy skin, hair and nails. Hypothyroidism results in poor conversion which causes dry skin and hair, and hair loss.

# Healthy Hair

## Essential Fatty Acids

The omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids found in flax and borage seed oils are important for healthy skin and hair. They also form important antiinflammatory compounds.

## Rosemary oil

For centuries men and women have massaged their scalps with rosemary in olive oil to keep their hair lush and healthy.

## Safflower oil

Safflower is used to increase blood flow to the scalp in Chinese herbal medicine. A safflower oil massage is often recommended by Chinese physicians to help nutrients get to the hair follicles.

## Superoxide Dismutase

One of the most potent hair growth stimulators is topical oxygen radical scavengers such as superoxide dismutase. Superoxide dismutase may also inhibit the local immune response which underlies many forms of hair loss.

# Healthy Hair

## **Saw palmetto**

Androgenic alopecia is a form of male pattern baldness that is associated with a buildup of dihydro-testosterone in the hair follicle which causes an immune reaction against the hair follicle.

The main pharmacological activity of saw palmetto berries is the inhibition of the enzyme 5-alpha-reductase which catalyzes the conversion of testosterone into dihydro-testosterone (DHT). An accumulation of DHT in the prostate is believed to contribute to both prostatic enlargement and male pattern baldness.

# Nail Problems

## **Discolored nails**

Discolored nails could mean trouble with your blood sugar.

## **Nail polish remover**

Brittleness may occur as a result of frequent use of nail polish remover.

## **Nail biting**

Nail biting and picking can also damage the nail and surrounding skin.

## **Harsh chemicals**

Harsh chemicals can also take their toll on nails.

# Nail Problems

## **Brittle nails**

A lack of vitamin A and calcium causes dryness and brittleness.

## **Ridges**

A B vitamin deficiency causes fragility with horizontal and vertical ridges in the nail.

## **Rounded nails**

A vitamin B12 deficiency leads to rounded and curved nails.

## **Hangnails**

A lack of protein, folic acid, and vitamin C causes hangnails.

## **Fungus**

A lack of "friendly bacteria" (lactobacillus) in the intestines leads to fungus under and around the nails.

## **Splitting**

A deficiency in hydrochloric acid contributes to splitting nails.

## **Spooning**

Low iron can cause soft nails that look scooped out.

## **White spots**

White spots often indicate a zinc deficiency.

# Nail Fungus

## **Garlic**

Fresh garlic is one of the best antiseptics in general and antifungals in particular. Garlic cloves can be crushed and applied directly to the affected area and eaten for extra action.

## **Teatree oil**

Teatree oil is a powerful antiseptic that is very useful against fungal skin infections, including athlete's foot and yeast. A few drops can be applied to the area three times a day.

## **Black walnut**

Black walnut is a strong antifungal herb that is particularly effective against Candida.

## **Lemongrass**

Lemongrass has significant fungicidal activity against several common fungi. You can drink a cup of lemongrass tea and apply contents of the wet tea bag directly onto the affected area.

## **Pau d'arco**

Pau d'arco contains three antifungal compounds: lapachol, beta-lapachone and xyloidine. It is particularly effective against Candida.

## **More Booklets**

Dr. Steriti has written several booklets on natural health, including:

Tips for New Mothers

Healthy Skin, Hair and Nails Naturally

Sports Nutrition for Athletes

A Guide to Diets

What Foods to Buy at an Organic Market or Health Food Store

How to Choose a Good Multiple

Great Health Quotes

An Introduction to Naturopathy and Naturopathic Medicine

Alternative and Nutritional Lab Tests

These booklets can be ordered by sending \$5 per booklet with a self-addressed, double-stamped envelope to:

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# **How to Find a Naturopath**

## **What is Naturopathy?**

Naturopathy is a term made popular in the early 1900's to describe a system of medicine that emphasizes natural therapies including herbs, homeopathy, hydrotherapy, nutrition, diet, and manipulation.

## **What is Naturopathic Medicine?**

Naturopathic medical schools have four-year full-time programs that teach both naturopathy and conventional Western diagnosis and treatment. Graduates are trained to become primary care physicians in licensed states.

There are currently four naturopathic medical schools in the United States and one in Canada: Bastyr, National, and Southwest Colleges of Naturopathic Medicine, The University of Bridgeport, and the Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine.

Currently Alaska, Arizona, British Columbia, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Manitoba, Montana, New Hampshire, Ontario, Oregon, Utah, Vermont and Washington have naturopathic medical licensing laws.

## **Where do I find a naturopath?**

Check the American Association of Naturopathic Physician's web site:

[www.naturopathic.org](http://www.naturopathic.org)

# **Top Ten Reasons to See a Naturopath**

1. It's part of your healthy life-style.
2. You are taking a lot of supplements, but aren't sure if they are right for you.
3. You want advice from a specialist that is well trained in natural therapies.
4. You want to make an informed decision about your health.
5. You want a natural health program designed for you.
6. You are confused by contradictory health claims.
7. You have vague complaints but aren't sick enough to see a medical doctor or use drugs.
8. You are concerned about the long-term side effects of drugs.
9. You have an uncommon health problem which has many specialists baffled.
10. The drugs you are taking cause side effects which are worse than the original problem.