



4 foods that nourish your skin

Kidney beans

Not your first thought when you think skin, right? Beans may be good for your heart and may be responsible for a fair amount of embarrassing flatulence, but they may be good for your face as well.

Kidney beans are an excellent source of zinc, a key nutrient in skin health. Human skin is in a constant state of renewal and regeneration. Studies show that many of these rejuvenating processes are dependent on zinc-based enzymes and proteins. In fact, skin blemishes are often a symptom of zinc deficiency.

Other foods high in zinc include pumpkin seeds, oysters, ginger and Brazil nuts.

Sunflower seeds

Snack on sunflower seeds or add them as a topping to protect your skin. Sunflower seeds are an excellent source of vitamin E, which plays a vital role in fending against free radicals that damage delicate skin.

One ounce supplies a massive two-thirds of the daily requirement of this powerful antioxidant, which also promotes collagen and elastin production, the fibres that give skin its structure.

A recent study found improvements in the quality and condition of both the hair and skin of healthy dogs who were given a sunflower seed supplement daily for one month.

Other foods high in copper and zinc include kale, mushrooms, prunes, chickpeas and pumpkin seeds.

Pomegranates

Pomegranates are one of the most highly concentrated sources of antioxidants you can find. Polyphenols spring into action to help repair damaged skin, and research has shown that the high anthocyanin and tannin concentration of pomegranates provide **anti-tumour affects as well as protecting the skin from the sun's UVB rays**, which can be particularly damaging to skin, even in the winter months.

Along with being an abundant source of antioxidants, pomegranates are an excellent source of other skin-saving nutrients including potassium, copper, zinc, iron and vitamins C and K, and promote the production of collagen-producing cells called fibroblasts.

Other antioxidant-rich foods to incorporate into your skin-care diet include plums, oranges and all varieties of berries.



Chocolate

Yes, you read that right! But don't dive for a chocolate bar just yet. Dark chocolate, specifically that which is comprised of 70 percent or more cocoa, is rich in compounds called flavanols. These potent antioxidants not only provide protection from damaging solar rays, but help repair skin from the inside out.

A German study published in the Journal of Nutrition documented the effect of **flavanol rich cocoa on women's skin. One group of women drank a flavanol-rich beverage daily while another group was given a low flavanol drink. All participants were then exposed to UV rays. After 12 weeks, the group who drank the flavanol-rich drink exhibited less skin damage after sun exposure as well as increased blood flow, skin density and hydration.**

Furthermore, the appearance of skin roughness and scaling was also significantly reduced among the women who consumed the flavanol-rich drink. Be sure to check what you eat carefully; milk chocolate and white chocolate have little to no flavanol content, and are typically loaded with sugar.

Other flavanol-rich foods include onion, asparagus, lima beans and spinach.

