

Feed your face: From A to Zinc

By Karen Keady
Correspondent

Among the many ingredients in skincare products, there are only a few that really make a difference and are backed by clinical studies.

The skin absorbs up to 60 percent of whatever it comes in contact with. Consequently, when chemical preservatives are included in a cosmetic, they do nothing for the skin, they merely prolong the shelf-life of the product. Many also have harmful side effects. There are nearly 82,000 different chemicals utilized in consumer products in the U.S., which accumulate in the body and in the environment. It takes years for these chemicals to break down when absorbed through your skin.

Organic skincare products have come a long way, becoming very effective and healthful alternatives to chemical formulations. Today's organics can achieve dramatic results, without the negative or harmful side effects of preservative-laden

products.

Three ingredients with the best scientific backing are Vitamin A, which increases elastin, collagen and hyaluronic acid in the skin; Vitamin C, (which needs to be at least 10% L-ascorbic acid to be effective), stimulates collagen and elastin production; and Vitamin E, an antioxidant that slows aging of the skin.

Another universal antioxidant for healthy skin is Alpha-Lipoic Acid, or ALA. ALA is both water- and fat-soluble, so it works to protect the inside and the outside of cells. ALA is an essential antioxidant in a skincare routine. Zinc is an important mineral in skin health, especially in the case of acne prevention. Zinc reduces inflammation, expedites healing, plus acts as a catalyst in tissue regeneration. Acne, eczema, and psoriasis are helped with products and foods rich in zinc. Zinc also helps strengthen the immune system.

There's more to beautiful, healthy skin than great genes. We all know the benefits of

fresh vegetables and fruits in our diets. Now, researchers have begun to discover the power of plants when used on the skin. Gorgeous greens, botanical oils, probiotics, lycopene, plus the amino acids that create peptides, are all changing the face of skin care. The benefits of peptides are amazing and capable of so much on a cellular level in skincare.

Peptides are cell communicators, each having a different function within the skin. Some produce collagen, others help with cell renewal, hyperpigmentation, hydration or skin sensitivity. Others, called neuropeptides, help to relax muscles that cause fine lines and wrinkles. Clients who prefer not to use Botox may benefit from results provided by neuropeptides. Peptides used in skincare products are derived from botanical sources, providing non-irritating results, and they actually signal skin cells to act in a healthier, younger way.

Co-enzyme Q10 has exceptional antioxidant properties, increasing tissue

oxygenation, combating free radical damage and minimizing wrinkle formation. Skincare products must contain an active level of CoQ10 to be effective.

Lastly, prickly pear is a new star on the list of goodness for skin health. Eating Prickly pear cactus has been proven to provide many health benefits. Applying prickly pear externally aids in skin health. It's anti-inflammatory, contains vitamin E, is rich in amino acids, plus the vitamin K in prickly pear helps to brighten dark circles and promotes elasticity.

Never be intimidated by the ingredients in professional products. Product knowledge benefits you in many ways. Just as you read labels on foods you put into your body, read the labels on cosmetics. The number-one ingredient should never be water. That means it's highly diluted, plus must have chemical preservatives to prevent spoilage. Simply put, water rots botanicals. As always, fresh is best. From the farm, to your face!

COCC offers info about health careers

Central Oregon Community College (COCC) is offering an information session about its Allied Health programs at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, October 26, in Room 260 of the Health Careers Center on the COCC Bend Campus. Programs include dental assisting, massage therapy, medical assistant, pharmacy technician and veterinary technician.

In the session they will include a description of each occupation, the typical clinical and administrative duties as well as the certification or licensing required. There will also be a review of the structure, length and cost of each of the programs.

It is not necessary to be enrolled at COCC to attend this session. The sessions last approximately one hour. Visitor parking is available in the Barber Library parking lot across the street from the Health Careers Center.

For information, call 541-383-7420.

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