

How we look is a function of what we eat. There are foods that age the body, and foods that help keep us young. Making changes in our diet to focus on anti-aging foods will keep the body looking young.

For some, cutting back on caloric intake seems like a good idea for a youthful body. While eliminating bad foods is good for the body, lowering caloric intake shuts down the metabolism. It tells the body that it is starving. Not eating enough calories will also force the body to cannibalize muscle and hold on to fat. This will cause the body to gain weight and to form saggy muscles. The body considers muscle to be expendable during periods of starvation, and it considers fat to be necessary to insulate your organs for survival. It is essential to eat a sufficient quantity of the right foods with every meal. This ensures firm muscle tone, builds muscle strength and helps protect the body shape.

The best eating patterns are meals that include a complement of protein, fats and complex carbohydrates several times a day. Eat a mix of complex carbohydrates in the form of fresh fruits and vegetables, leafy green salads, beans and whole grains.

EAT TO LOOK YOUNGER

by Dr. Carol Ann Fischer

Snacks should also be balanced to help keep blood sugar stable. Nuts and seeds naturally provide a balance of protein, fat and complex carbohydrates, making them a perfect snack. Avoiding stimulants, sugars and refined carbohydrates like donuts, white bread, pasta or rice and packaged foods keeps the body young and healthy.

Below are specific foods that can help keep you young:

Walnuts and Flax: These foods contain essential fats that nourish the skin, help maintain skin integrity and keep skin cells performing optimally. Essential fatty acids are a component of all cell membranes in the body.

Salmon and Avocados: Salmon contains protein and omega-3 essential fatty acids, which enhance blood flow. The pink/orange color

of wild salmon is beta-carotene, the anti-aging nutrient that protects cell membranes. Salmon also contains an antioxidant ingredient that improves facial muscle tone and reduces wrinkles. Another antioxidant-rich food also high in good fats is avocado.

Eggs, Carrots, Kale, Sweet Potatoes and Spinach: These foods contain vitamin A, which is especially important for skin repair. Decreased levels can lead to dry, flaky skin, with poor healing and easy wrinkle formation. Eating vitamin A rich foods supplies beta-carotene known for brightening the eyes.

Hot Red Peppers, Sweet Peppers, Kale and Broccoli: These complex carbohydrate foods are high in vitamin C. Collagen and vitamin C are used to make connective tissue for the skin. These foods also tighten the skin.

Beets, Broccoli and Spinach: These vegetables help keep the liver working efficiently to remove toxins, heavy metals and trans fats. The green foods like broccoli and spinach also take away the craving for sweets. Foods high in sugars cause vitamin deficiencies because the body has to use stored vitamins to metabolize the sugars. This causes aging to occur faster and creates wrinkles.

Celery, Carrots, String Beans and Cauliflower: Fresh raw crunchy veggies are good for the teeth, just as they are for the skin. They contain cellulose that helps scrub stains from the teeth, creating a whiter, brighter smile.

Meat, Protein and Lentils: With age, hair and skin cells become damaged, creating an older appearance. The protein in meat, chicken and certain vegetables promotes cell growth and repair. This creates younger-looking skin, fewer wrinkles, less hair loss and a glossy mane. It is well known that lentils contain more protein than any other legume.

Beans, Spinach, Peas, Green Leafy Vegetables and Kelp: These foods contain zinc. Involved in hundreds of reactions in the body, zinc is important in the creation of insulin which is needed to move sugar into the cells. Zinc is also needed for metabolizing energy in the body. Lack of zinc creates pain in the body. Avoid eating a lot of wheat as it depletes the body of zinc.

Looking and feeling younger can be a reality for everyone with simple diet and lifestyle changes. For those making serious changes to their eating patterns, a holistic wellness physician can help determine the correct ratio of protein, fat and carbohydrates, and the specific foods needed for a youthful and healthy body.

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