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by Carol and Rob Trow

DO VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS really improve skin health? We all are aware that topical skin care through professional treatments and at home regimes play a significant role in fighting intrinsic and extrinsic aging. But what about taking vitamin supplements that claim to enhance skin health? Is there evidence to support their effectiveness or is it just a bunch of hype? The answer is both yes and no. Vitamin deficiencies can make skin look lifeless. According to Data Monitor, a marketing analysis company, the nutraceutical industry that is connected to beauty will exceed one billion dollars within the next few years.

One thing is clear—health experts believe that vitamins and minerals play an integral role in skin care, whether the source is food, supplements or topicals. An unhealthy lifestyle (i.e., smoking, an unbalanced diet, exposure to a pollution infested environment) can worsen one's complexion.

Georgina Donadio, Ph.D., founder and director of the National Institute of Whole Health, asserts that the skin is a fingerprint of what is going on inside the body, including its nutritional process. She believes that feeding skin from the inside out can be helpful. Dr. Donadio's assumptions are supported by literally thousands of skin care authorities and nutritional experts.

The Journal of Investigative Dermatology reports the results of a significant study that found that taking nutritional supplements while also using topical



applications of vitamin based skin care products can play an important role in contributing to healthy skin, reduced sun damage and even DNA repair.

For someone who follows a daily diet that provides them with an adequate intake of vitamins, supplements may not be needed. However, few people obtain enough of the nutrients from food that are necessary to ensure healthy skin. That is why nutraceuticals are beneficial nutrients for achieving healthy skin.

The following list contains the fundamental essential nutrients for healthy skin and the role they play:

Vitamin A: Necessary for the maintenance and repair of skin tissue.

Vitamins C and E: Reduces damage caused by free radicals from smoke, pollution and sun exposure.

Vitamin B Complex: The combination of biotin and vitamins B2 and B6 form the basis for skin, nails and hair.

Colostrum: Contains an myriad of natural growth and immune factors to nourish skin.

Selenium, copper and zinc: These minerals contribute to skin health.

Omega 3: These fatty acids are critical to the maintenance of a healthy cellular process.

Most experts agree that a multivitamin should provide the nutritional supplementation that skin needs when taken in conjunction with a healthy diet. However, eating a balanced diet that includes an appropriate amount of fats, proteins, carbohydrates and vitamins is good for overall health of the skin and body. ■

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