

Avoid These Foods If You Want Good Skin

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If your daily meal plan consists of pre-packaged Lean Cuisines and Doritos instead of fresh produce and organic proteins, you're going to pay for it -- both internally and externally. Meaning: not only will you feel the consequences of a poor diet churning in your gut, but you'll also see them on your skin.

As your largest and fastest-growing organ, skin reflects your overall body health. If you nourish it from the inside out, it will glow; if you "feed" it with junk, it will revolt. And in very unaesthetic ways, might I add.

To help clear things up (literally), dermatologists and skin care experts revealed 10 common foods and ingredients that have adverse effects on your complexion. Coffee addicts, say your goodbyes now.

Sugar

Who doesn't love a slice of cake or a scoop of ice cream (or, if you're me, a 5lb bag of Sour Patch Kids usually meant for sharing) every now and again? Pretty much everyone... except for your skin. The sugar in your favorite tasty treats can trigger insulin spikes, leading to skin inflammation; in other words, cue

Caffeine

Yup, your morning cup (or three) of java is also a culprit. According to Dr. Jessica Weiser at the New York Dermatology Group, the caffeine found in your precious coffee encourages the pituitary gland in the brain to produce more cortisol (a stress hormone), which can worsen acne

breakouts and accelerate aging. "Caffeine also acts as a diuretic," Weiser explains, "which dehydrates your skin and leaves it looking dry and dull with more prominent wrinkles."

Whey protein

Bodybuilders, beware. Whey, a protein derived from milk that's popularly used as a muscle-building supplement, is also known to instigate breakouts. "Whey contains a growth factor that stimulates the body's production of insulin and androgens," explains Dr. Janet H. Prystowsky, president of Livad Skin Care. "This subsequently increases sebum production in the skin, resulting in acne." If you notice zits popping up like Whac-a-Moles, Prystowsky suggests switching to a non-milk protein source.

Alcohol

You likely already knew that drinking Maker's Mark doesn't exactly provide you with health benefits -- jus a nice buzz and some cloudy decision-making skills. But the detrimental effects your favorite swill can have on your complexion may just be enough to make you put the bottle down. "Drinking alcohol leads t facial flushing, broken capillaries, swelling of the skin and soft tissues, and specifically worsens rosace explains Weiser. "It also dehydrates the skin, leaving it looking dry and ashy."

Processed foods

Packaged and processed foods (like white bread, processed cereals, white rice, cakes, pretzels, etc.) hav a high glycemic index and break down quickly in the body. SparkNotes version? They wreak havoc on your skin. "High-glycemic foods trigger an insulin spike and raise blood sugar levels," says Dr. Joyce Imahiyerobo-Ip, director of cosmetic dermatology at South Shore Medical Center and consultant for HydroPeptide. "These changes will cause hormonal fluctuations and inflammation, which in turn encourage acne." Adds NYC-based esthetician Sarah Swans on growth and a change in skin pH that lead to acne." "The excess sugars can promote bacteri

For clearer skin, opt instead for low-glycemic and clean foods, like veggies and lean proteins.

Hydrogenated fats & oils

They're the dietary equivalent of that really annoying uncle who cracks stupid jokes at every holiday par that no one laughs at, only if your annoying uncle also

ave you hear t dis eas e . Hydrogenated fats and oils are found in most processed and fast foods and are often used in restaurants to fry up the chow, so they're hard to escape -- but from a nutrition standpoint, they're terrible for you inside and out. "When th oil is heated to very high temperatures, the fat oxidizes," explains Weiser. "Once ingested, it can cause oxidative damage to cells, which leads to cellular damage and contributes to accelerated skin aging."

Still want that Quesarito?

Dairy

As someone who believes pepper Jack cheese deserves its own section on the food pyramid, this was a devastating thing to learn. Milk -- including milk-based foods like cheese and yogurt -- has components testosterone, "which can stimulate oil glands and cause cystic acne," says Dr. Debra Luftman, dermatologist and Simple Skincare Advisory Board member.

Furthermore, the added hormones found in cow's milk encourage the overgrowth of skin cells, which ca block pores and lead to breakouts; and believe it or not, skim milk is the worst offender of this. "The process used to produce skim milk actually leaves more acne-causing hormones behind," explains Imahiyerobo-Ip. For a more porcelain complexion, opt for organic dairy products to avoid added hormones, or consider non-dairy options like almond milk.

Salt

Your body has to maintain the right balance of water and sodium to function properly. And unfortunatel your beloved salty foods can upset this equilibrium, which in turn shows up on your skin. "Excess sodiu causes the body to hold water," explains board-certified dermatologist Dr. Debbie Palmer. "This triggers inflammation and makes the skin on your face look puffy." Basically, skip the Pringles if you have an interview (or date) the next day.

As if I wasn't regretting last night's bar nachos enough, salt also dehydrates your skin cells. "This leads t poor skin tone and can predispose you to wrinkles," explains Swanson. So, you should also cap the Pringles can if you don't want to resemble a shar-pei in 10 years.

Bread

While gluten (a mixture of proteins found in wheat and related grains) is specifically problematic for those with celiac disease or a gluten sensitivity, Weiser explains that its pro-

inflammatory properties can worsen anyone's skin rashes, irritation, redness, and itching. "Gluten can also cause dermatitis herpetiformis, an inflammatory and superficially blistering condition that primarily affects elbows, knee buttocks, and sometimes around the mouth," says Weiser. Not the buttocks!

Pardon me while I put down my pasta fork.

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