



The 11 Best Supplements for Clear, Glowing Skin

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Date: January 17th, 2017

URL: <https://www.wellandgood.com/good-looks/best-supplements-for-clear-glowing-skin/>

Sad but true: Your facial oils, skin-boosting smoothies, and “I totally eat my greens” diet don’t always solve your breakout woes. But there might be a (semi) magic pill that can help. And they’re called supplements. Not just any old drugstore ones, though.

“Your body needs a balance of nutrients to stay healthy—and your skin, which is the largest organ in the body, is no different,” says Debbie Palmer, MD, a dermatologist and author of *Beyond Beauty*. While she recommends trying to get the best nourishment from your diet, Dr. Palmer notes that supplements can deliver your body glow-inducing ingredients you wouldn’t normally eat on the reg (like chlorella or krill oil, for instance).

Think of these skin-friendly pills as a hyper-targeted way to fill the gap between your topical treatments and nourishing foods. “Most of the time, the necessary therapeutic dose of a nutrient that helps with inflammation, hormonal support, or repairing the skin is hard to get on a daily basis,” says Corina Crysler, clinical nutritionist and co-founder of Glisodin Skin Nutrients.

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But don’t think you can just pop open a bottle and see immediate results. Whatever your root cause of acne may be, Crysler notes it’s important to be consistent and patient. “Most supplement plans take at least two months to really start working in a noticeable way,” she says. “The skin also needs to go through a few [28-day] cycles before you see new and healthy [layers].”

Think of these capsules as a treatment that helps your skin to do its thing properly—and, of course, enhance your natural glow.

Keep reading for the best supplements for clear skin, based on your acne type.

The problem: Hormonal acne

“This is the acne that typically shows up in areas around the chin and can be more predominate about one week before the menstrual cycle when estrogen starts to plunge and cravings increase,” says Crysler. “Cutting out dairy and sugar can significantly help, in addition to taking these supplements.”

The supplement: Maca root

It’s not just a smoothie booster—the herbacious plant helps stabilize your hormones, which is major if your breakouts coincide with your menstrual cycle. “This hormonal regulator works directly with the endocrine system to help establish balance,” says Crysler. “It acts as an adaptogen to help the system deal with stress and adrenal fatigue.” She advises that it can be used daily, but definitely 7-10 days before your menstrual cycle.

Try: Vega Maca Vegicaps, \$22

The supplement: Vitamin B6/B12

Have bad cramps with a side of pimples? Consider B complex supplements. “This is a key vitamin for the metabolic system, and is also known to help with stress and PMS,” says Crysler. The combo of both B vitamins results in a super-effective one-two-punch, she adds, as B12 helps with the bioavailability of B6.

Try: Sisu Super B Complex, \$23

The supplement: Zinc

You probably only know zinc as the ingredient to look for in mineral sunscreens, but it can also play a role in getting clear skin. “Zinc reduces the production of dihydrotestosterone (DHT)—which can clog pores and increase pimple-causing inflammation,” she explains. She recommends dividing the daily dosage, since zinc can upset the stomach.

Try: Metagenics Zinc A.G., \$14

The supplement: Evening primrose oil

If your acne is typically of the painful, cystic type (hello, raging hormones), evening primrose is your ideal aid. “This is a great source of omega-6 and GLA—another fatty acid, which has anti-inflammatory properties and helps sooth and strengthen the skin barrier,” says Crysler. “It also helps with healing lesions and redness.” The oil is also said to help relieve PMS symptoms. Win-win?

Try: Metagenics OmegaGenics Evening Primrose Oil, \$22

The problem: Stress acne

Excess stress tends to show up on your face—ever notice those pimples that pop up after a night of last-minute studying or rushing to meet a deadline? “Stress is a major factor in skin health, as it can trigger oxidative stress and start the inflammatory cascade in the body,” says Crysler. “This effects your adrenals, hormones, and your ability to fight off typical free radicals—which can irradiate the skin and cause acne.” Being able to manage stress is crucial—and luckily, some supplements can help your body with that.

The supplement: Pycnogenol

Yes, collagen has glowy skin benefits (just ask Jennifer Aniston)—but the collagen your body naturally produces needs to be protected. Enter pycnogenol. “Pycnogenol is a branded pine bark extract, which has great antioxidant properties,” she says. “It protects the collagen matrix from free radicals and increases skin stability during healing, which reduces scarring from acne and can reduce hyperpigmentation.”

Try: Source Naturals Pycnogenol, \$37

The supplement: Antioxidant enzyme

Antioxidants are great (and fight skin damage, for one), but antioxidant enzymes are more powerful because they stay in the body longer, notes Crysler—which gives them time to work their magic on your complexion. “They have the ability to destroy millions of free radicals to reduce oxidative stress, which leads to inflammation,” she says. “And GliSODin helps your body produce more of its own antioxidants.” Basically, acne-causing free radicals don’t stand much of a chance.

Try: GliSODin Skin Brightening Formula, \$85

The supplement: Ashwagandha

Adaptogens are rockstar herbs for the body—skin included. “Adaptogens are amazing for reducing stress while strengthening our bodies to properly regulate our adrenal system,” notes Crysler. “Ashwagandha is a favorite of mine and can be easily added to a smoothie or taken in capsules.” She points out that it contains withanolides, a natural, antioxidant-filled steroid that limits inflammation in the skin, in addition to helping your hormonal response towards stress.

Try: Sun Potion Ashwagandha, \$37

The supplement: Omega-3

Healthy fats from fish could result in a glowing complexion—just ask Victoria Beckham. But if you’re not ordering sushi on the reg, opt for a supplement instead. “Krill oil is particularly good for acne because it contains a carotene called astaxanthin, which is also an antioxidant. Krill also has higher phospholipid content, so it’s very beneficial for the skin barrier and hydration, plus it absorbs better than other fish oils,” says Crysler.

Try: NutriStart NutriKrill Superba Krill Oil, \$50

The problem: Dietary acne

“Acne on the cheeks and jaw line is a sign that your digestive track can use some help,” says Crysler. “A poor diet can be a leading cause of acne. Fried foods, sugar, dairy, and processed foods can cause inflammation in the body—and also be taxing on the liver.” This is why Crysler advises using liver-cleansing and nutrient-dense supplements to help manage those breakouts—key when you wake up after a wild night to a massive pimple on your chin.

The supplement: Milk thistle

It’s not just a tincture your hippie aunt uses—milk thistle works double duty detoxifying your liver and fighting inflammation (multitasking FTW). “Milk thistle contains silymarin, which is both an anti-inflammatory and antioxidant that directly works with cleansing the liver,” says Crysler. It also helps your liver process fat more efficiently—and, of course, healthy fats lead to that coveted glow.

Try: WelOrganics Milk Thistle, \$22

The supplement: Alpha lipoid acid

Another way to keep your liver clean (which leads to clear skin) is through alpha lipoid acid. “This supplement increases the production of glutathione, an antioxidant enzyme that helps protect your liver,” says Crysler. “It can also help with pulling heavy metals from the body—having too much in your system can show up on your skin.” Basically it works like a magnet for acne-causing buildup.

Try: Thorne Research Liver Tablets, \$15

The supplement: Chlorella

Not everyone’s eating chlorella on the reg, but the nutrient-rich green—which comes from green algae—can help reduce your body’s stress levels and hormonal imbalances. “Chlorella is rich in magnesium, which diminishes stress and aids in the elimination of toxins as well as reducing inflammation,” says Crysler. There’s nothing like the power of greens.

Try: BioChlorella Chlorella Tablets, \$22