

A GUIDE FOR KEEPING YOUR SKIN'S YOUTH

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We all seek that elusive fountain of youth so we can look younger and avoid the signs of aging. Finding a fountain of youth is an unrealistic goal, but there are many everyday ways we can hold off the signs of aging for a more youthful appearance.

Our skin is important because it protects our internal organs from the environment, helps balance fluids, regulates body temperature and provides the receptors for sensation, such as pain and pressure. Our skin consists of three layers – the epidermis, the dermis and the subcutaneous layer. The epidermis is the outer portion with skin cells, pigment and proteins. The middle section is the dermis that has blood vessels, hair follicles, oil glands and nerves. The lower layer has some hair follicles, sweat glands, fat and blood vessels. All the layers are held together with connective tissues that consist of collagen fibers and elastin fibers for strength and flexibility.

As you get older, the layers in your skin show natural signs of aging. The dermis gets thinner and more translucent and dark spots may appear. The blood vessels in the dermis get more fragile, causing bruising. Sebaceous glands produce less oil resulting in dry, itchy skin. The subcutaneous fat layer gets thinner, resulting in increased possibility for skin injury and minimizes your body's ability to maintain a proper temperature.

Keeping these factors in mind, there are two types of aging – intrinsic aging and extrinsic aging. Intrinsic aging are inevitable aging factors determined by your genetics and there is no way to alter their natural course. These intrinsic changes actually start to occur in our 20's but do not reveal themselves until decades later. Because collagen production slows as we age and elastin has less spring, we naturally show certain unavoidable signs of aging such as:

- thin, transparent skin;
- wrinkles;
- itchy, dry skin;
- sagging skin due to loss of bone density;
- loss of underlying fat under the skin with loss of firmness;
- unwanted hair growth or hair loss; and
- inability to sweat enough to cool off the surface of your skin.

Extrinsic aging factors are external and can be controlled by your habits and behaviors to slow down the aging process. Examples of extrinsic aging factors include sun exposure, cigarette smoking and facial expressions. Added to these factors are natural conditions that age skin, such as gravity and the inevitable decline in elasticity. Gravity pulls on your skin and body constantly and naturally causes aging. As the elasticity in your skin naturally declines, droopy eyelids and jowls may occur.

So what can you do to avoid signs of extrinsic aging? There are several elements you should consider that speed up extrinsic aging of your skin, such as:

The Sun. Dermatologists use the term photoaging to describe aging caused by exposure to the sun's rays over the years. Noticeable changes happen to your skin after years of exposure to the sun, such as fine wrinkles, freckles, age spots, spider veins, blotches, red patches, loose skin and even skin cancer. Scientists have found that when your skin is repeatedly exposed to ultraviolet (UV) rays, such exposure breaks down collagen and also impairs the synthesis of new collagen. The UV rays from the sun also attack the elastic in our skin. This results in loose, wrinkly skin with a leathery texture. To avoid sun damage, limit your exposure to the sun and avoid the hours between 10 AM and 4 PM, when the sun is strongest. Wear protective clothing and hats to block the sun's rays. Remember to always use a sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or better, even in the winter. You can choose moisturizers and cosmetics that have built-in sunscreen for added protection. Try to select sunscreen products that block both UVA and UVB rays for maximum protection against the sun's harmful rays.

Cigarette Smoking. We are aware of harmful effects cigarette smoking has on our lungs and breathing. However, cigarette smoking also takes a terrible toll on the appearance of our skin because it causes biochemical changes in our bodies that accelerate the aging process. Scientists have conducted studies that showed years of cigarette smoking can cause people to develop an unhealthy yellow color to their complexions. Also, a study performed in 2002 revealed that tiny wrinkles can be seen under a microscope on the skin of smokers as young as 20 years old. Avoid smoking to slow down your skin's aging process and have better overall health. Even people who have been heavy smokers for years showed significant signs of improved skin tone after quitting cigarettes.

Circulation. Improved circulation ensures the proper flow of blood and essential nutrients throughout your body for a better overall appearance, including your skin. Regular exercise three times each week or more will give you better circulation and healthier skin.

Facial Expressions. Have you ever heard the old saying that it takes more muscles to frown than it does to smile? The fact of the matter is that facial movements actually lead to fine wrinkles and lines in the surface of your skin. If you make certain repetitive facial expressions, certain grooves become permanently etched into your skin as fine wrinkles. To avoid frown lines, simply stop frowning!

Medical Conditions. Certain signs of aging are actually warnings of an underlying medical condition. Signs of skin cancer can include scaly lesions that are a reddish color, new skin growths, moles that change color or shape, irregular age spots, and bruises that do not heal. Sores that do not heal can indicate diabetes, circulatory problems or skin cancer. Severe itching can be a sign of diabetes or indicate an adverse reaction to medication. Excessively dry skin that will not receive moisture can be a sign of dermatitis or psoriasis. A vein in your leg that bulges or is quite tender could be a varicose vein. Headaches, pain and blisters could mean you have shingles. If you experience ongoing skin problems that could be a sign of a more serious medical condition, make sure to consult with your physician and a dermatologist.

Taking Good Care of Your Skin. There are other ways to minimize the impact of the years on your skin. Proper care and maintenance of your skin can slow down the effects of aging

and improve your skin's overall appearance.

Start by washing your face twice each day. Choose a gentle cleanser that is suitable for your skin type, whether it is dry, normal, combination skin, sensitive or oily. Use warm water that is not too hot or too cold. A soft washcloth made from natural fibers can be employed to cleanse your face or simply use your clean hands. After washing your face, dry off with an absorbent towel made from cotton or other natural fibers that will not irritate your skin. Cleansers can be in the form of liquid soap or liquid lotion, depending on how dry your skin is. The [Delicate Cleansing Soap](#) by Verattiva is formulated to be gentle enough to use for the daily hygiene of sensitive skin. For a richer formula, the [Purifying Cleansing Milk](#) by Verattiva is a light lotion that was specifically designed to cleanse the skin deeply but gently. To further cleanse your skin after washing, remove excess skin cells and makeup and tighten your pores, a gentle toner should be applied to your face with a cotton ball. The [Face Tonic and Refresher](#) by Verattiva is an important step in cleansing your skin fully to prepare it before applying a moisturizer.

After you wash your face thoroughly and use a toner, you will need to moisturize your skin. Moisturizers plump up the surface of your skin to minimize the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles and eliminate dryness externally. Also remember to hydrate your skin internally by drinking six to eight glasses of water each day. The proper external moisturizer will soften your skin, improve its appearance and reduce the impact of future damage. Moisturizers that incorporate natural ingredients such as aloe vera and milk are usually quite effective and non-irritating. Choose a moisturizer that is suitable for your particular skin type. Often, a light moisturizer is used during the day under makeup and a heavier moisturizer is applied at night to rehydrate the skin after the day's damage has been done. The [Daily Revitalizing Face Treatment](#) by Verattiva is a light lotion that improves the elasticity and hydration of your skin and can be used every day. For a heavier cream to use at night, try Verattiva's [Nurifying Face Night Treatment](#) which was formulated to act overnight to reset the skin's physiological balance by providing essential nutrients. If you have advanced signs of aging, you can try the [Anti-Aging and Stiffening Face Treatment](#) by Verattiva which acts as a tonic and actually stiffens the skin to inhibit signs of aging.

Sometimes the skin around your eyes shows more wrinkles than the skin in other areas of your face because we use our eyes for so many expressions. Also, loss of elasticity can cause bagging and sleepless night can create dark circles. The [Eye Care Serum](#) by Verattiva has been specifically formulated to reduce imperfections that occur in the delicate area under the eyes, such as those dreaded bags and dark circles.

Dead skin cells on the surface of your skin clog the pores and cause the skin to age more rapidly. Using a facial mask one or twice each week can remove dead skin cells that dull your skin. The [Purifying Peel-Off Mask](#) by Verattiva has been specially developed to trigger the skin's active functions, forming an inert film that is then removed to eliminate facial impurities and reveal healthier-looking skin.

Although the effects of aging on our skin are inevitable, certain behaviors can minimize the impact of external factors. By taking proper care of our bodies and skin, we can achieve a more youthful appearance while ensuring our maximum health. Taking a few simple steps each day, such as drinking water, properly cleansing your skin and avoiding smoking, can greatly improve the way your skin looks and feels.