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The Top Anti-Ageing Foods

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AVOCADOS

These are the perfect anti-ageing food. They're an excellent source of vitamin E, which helps support the linings of your arteries and veins, preventing heart disease in later life. Vitamin E is also an antioxidant, so eating avocados could help to prevent free radicals from damaging cells and keep your skin looking youthful. Make guacamole by mashing one medium avocado and adding some finely chopped onion, fresh red chilli, garlic, salt, pepper and a splash of lime juice.



OATS

... are a great stress reducer. Herbalists have used them for years as a nerve tonic. They could help prevent frown lines, especially on your forehead: And they can also stop your skin getting thin, dry and showing signs of ageing. Oats are a great source of vitamin B5 and silicon, which are great nutrients for your skin. As a source of non-dairy calcium, magnesium and iron, they're also good for healthy bones. Try porridge made with soya milk and add a handful of chopped nuts or some cinnamon.



SWEET PEPPERS



... are packed full of antioxidant vitamin C to mop up free radicals and boost your immune system, keeping you healthy. Research has shown that vitamin C helps your body produce collagen to give your skin elasticity and make it look plump and firm. One large pepper also supplies your body with about 250ml of water, enough to fill a medium-sized glass which will keep your skin hydrated. Add them raw in salads for the best benefits, or stuff them with a mixture of rice, softened onions, mushrooms and tomatoes, and bake in the oven.

BLUEBERRIES

... will help keep your eyes bright and sparkling, and ward off age related vision loss. They contain flavonoids that strengthen the tiny blood vessels in your eyes, helping them get enough oxygen. Studies have shown blueberries could maintain your vision for longer and help prevent conditions such as glaucoma. Lutein, from dark green leafy veg, is also beneficial. Make a fruit compote with blueberries, raspberries, strawberries and blackcurrants and eat with an organic natural yoghurt for breakfast.



NUTS



...such as almonds, contain vitamin E and zinc both essential for keeping your skin looking young as they help promote skin growth and renewal. Research suggests a handful of almonds a day could help prevent conditions such as Type 11 diabetes, more common in the over-40s. They can also help reduce the risk of heart disease. Add a palmful of almonds to your cereal or sprinkle on yoghurt.

SEEDS

... especially linseeds and sunflower seeds, are a great source of omega 3 fatty acids. With similar benefits to oily fish, they also provide phyto, or plant, oestrogens, which are helpful in preventing breast cancer. Sunflower seeds are a superfood because they're packed with essential nutrients and they're rich in pectin, which helps remove toxins from your body. Scatter over salads, eat them as a snack or use them to add crunch to a vegetable curry.



BROCCOLI

... is a great source of non-dairy calcium and could help prevent osteoporosis, which is most common in post-menopausal women. It's another good antioxidant and could help keep cancer at bay. Broccoli contains high levels of B vitamins - good for cleansing your blood, which helps it carry oxygen around your body more effectively to keep your skin glowing. Be careful how you cook it, though, as a recent study found if you microwave it, it can lose up to 95 per cent of its nutrients. Steam it or add it to stir fried vegetables and tofu, then serve with whole grain brown rice.

SWEET POTATOES

... are a great source of betacarotene and vitamins E and C. 'New research shows that betacarotene may offer you some protection against sun damage: says Amanda Ursell. 'It seems to diffuse the sun's rays, which makes your sunscreen work more effectively. Sun damage is one of the main causes of age spots and wrinkles, so eating sweet potatoes could help prevent them, and even lower your risk of skin cancer. Make chips to eat with fish, or bake and top with ratatouille.

**SEAWEED**

... is a good source of iodine, vital for a healthy thyroid. Without enough iodine, your skin won't renew itself properly and could become dry and scaly, which may lead to wrinkles and age spots. Seaweed is rich in copper and is important for collagen production to keep skin strong and elastic. Add kombu seaweed to stocks and soups, or buy sushi made with nori seaweed.

FIVE THINGS THAT CAN AGE YOU

Sugar is one of the most ageing things you can eat. It causes inflammation and can aggravate problems such as arthritis. It also binds collagen proteins with other proteins and makes them rigid, which creates wrinkles and ages skin. Eat fewer cakes, sweets and biscuits, and watch out for hidden sugars in yoghurts and breakfast cereals.

Salt is dehydrating and can make your skin dry, causing premature wrinkles. It could also cause high blood pressure. Make sure you don't add extra salt to food and always take the time to look at the amount of sodium on food labels. Limit your intake and don't eat more than 6g a day. Reduce your intake of processed food, including bread, breakfast cereals, crackers and other biscuits.

Bad fats such as hydrogenated and saturated fats can contribute to health problems, including heart disease and diabetes. Too much fat in your diet often means you're lacking essential nutrients. Cut out crisps, biscuits, fried and convenience foods. And watch your intake of saturated fats in full-fat dairy products - switch to low-fat versions instead.

Alcohol is a diuretic and every time you drink it your body loses anti-ageing vitamins and minerals. Stick to one glass of red wine a day. This is thought to reduce your risk of heart disease.

Caffeine is another diuretic. It strains your liver, making it unable to flush out toxins as quickly as usual. It causes calcium loss from your bones, which could lead to osteoporosis. Switch to decaffeinated coffee, caffeine-free herbal and fruit teas, or green tea which is high in antioxidants.

ROOIBOS TEA

The tea made from the red bush tree in South Africa is 100 per cent organic and has seemingly endless medicinal value. It really is nature's medicine. It is best drunk alone, but you can add lemon or ginger. Milk can be added, but takes away the refreshing taste of the tea. Wean yourself off cow's milk being added to any tea and choose soya milk as an alternative.

Rooibos Tea:

- ***acts as an antioxidant that slows the ageing process***
- ***prevents cancer and lowers the risk of cardiovascular disease***
- ***is packed with flavonoids, antioxidants more powerful than vitamin C, green or black tea***
- ***supports the digestive system and is anti-spasmodic, relieving stomach cramps and colic in babies. helps manage allergies***
- ***soothes skin irritations when applied directly to the affected area***
- ***replenishes iron levels, so is useful for pregnant and menstruating women***
- ***is calorie-free***
- ***boosts the immune system***
- ***aids health problems like insomnia, irritability, headaches, nervous tension and hypertension***
- ***has a low tannin content (only 1-4 per cent)***
- ***contains no artificial colours, additives or preservatives***
- ***contains no caffeine, so can be drunk by pregnant women***
- ***contains no oxalic acid, which prevents iron absorption***
- ***contains copper, iron and potassium***
- ***contains zinc for a healthy skin***
- ***contains calcium, fluoride and manganese for strong bones and teeth***
- ***contains magnesium for the nervous system.***