

the natural fountain of youth

By Sherrie Strausfogel

Try these natural alternatives to invasive antiaging treatments

Let's face it, wrinkles, fine lines, brown spots, dryness, and sagging skin are the unmistakable signs of age. Plastic surgery and treatments such as laser resurfacing and Botox are quick fixes, but they can also pose serious health risks. Natural alternatives, however, not only improve the look of your skin, they also improve its health.

Five of the latest and most effective ingredients in antiaging beauty products are hyaluronic acid, retinyl palmitate (vitamin A), green tea, CoQ10, and peptides.

Healthy skin has a natural glow. Plump skin cells fit together like pieces of an intricate puzzle. When skin cells dry out, however, they begin to lift and separate at an angle, giving skin a dull, flaky look that makes it appear older. Nature's most effective moisturizer and wrinkle smoother is hyaluronic acid. It occurs naturally in soft tissue and muscle, and its purpose is to hold water in the skin cells and also to help hold skin cells together. Unfortunately, it diminishes with age. This depletion is a primary cause of skin aging. Natural skin care products containing hyaluronic acid actually help plump up fine lines and wrinkles.

Retinyl palmitate, a natural vitamin A derivative, is a natural skin smoother that encourages cell renewal and increases collagen. "Retinol is great for turnover of dead skin cells and will help to give a fresh glow to the skin," says Christine Rodgers, MD, a plastic surgeon based in Denver and a breast cancer survivor who has created her own toxin-free, antioxidant-rich skin care line.

Free radicals that are generated by ultraviolet light, pollution, smoke, and chemicals attack your skin cells, causing them to deteriorate. Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory green tea has also been proven to fight free radical damage. "Green tea is an effective, soothing antioxidant in skin care products," says Yael Halaas, MD, a New York-based plastic surgeon and creator of a skin care line infused with high doses of green tea.

CoQ10 is an essential antioxidant found in every living cell that provides

the energy source for cellular renewal and smooth, firm skin. As you age, your natural level of CoQ10 diminishes. Skin care products that include CoQ10 help defend against the aging process.

Most people laugh and frown up to 15,000 times each day. These movements create skin depressions around the eyes and mouth, on the forehead, and between the eyebrows. Peptides are chains of amino acids that are the building blocks of proteins. Peptides tell nerves and muscles to perform different functions. Specific peptides may reduce expression lines and wrinkles by disrupting the nerve signals sent to tense muscle, relaxing the muscle and smoothing the skin.

"Peptides strengthen the extracellular matrix and promote growth of collagen and elastin without stimulating random cell growth," says Rodgers. "Antiaging ingredients do work, but they may take six weeks to six months," she adds. "Products that claim immediate results can give an instantaneous result that lasts for about 20 minutes. It is better to go with a product that works effectively over time." +

DID YOU KNOW?

Moisturizers and humectants such as hyaluronic acid are most effective when applied to damp skin.

Product Examples (left to right):

Plump up wrinkles and smooth fine lines with Earth Science Beta-Ginseng Collagen Renewal Serum, a superhydrating formula containing hyaluronic acid and retinyl palmitate.

Firm skin around the eyes with Aubrey Organics Lumessence Rejuvenating Eye Crème, a sheer formula with vitamin A (and other nutrients) that increases skin's hydration by 25 percent.

Repair your skin while you sleep with Avalon Organics CoQ10 Wrinkle Defense Night Creme. The antioxidant protection of CoQ10 in this concentrated cream helps replenish skin's natural level of CoQ10, improving firmness and elasticity.

Reduce wrinkles and expression lines with MyChelle Dermaceuticals NoTex Anti-Wrinkle Serum, which contains five peptides that encourage collagen and elastin production for smoother skin.

