

Natural Skin Care with EPA

Incredible though it sounds, fish oil containing eicosapentaenoic acid or EPA, appears to slow down the ageing process and help us to look younger by protecting the skin and inhibiting the chemical processes that take place when our skin is exposed to damage-inducing stimuli, like the sun for example. Evidence suggests that aside from all the other documented health benefits of EPA, it can make our skin more resistant to sunburn, improve skin elasticity and tone and helps to prevent saggy skin and wrinkles from forming. Most of us know that UV radiation from the sun is public enemy number one as far as the skin is concerned. Overexposure results in premature ageing and wrinkles as well as reduced immunity to disease, and possibly even skin cancer. When our skin is exposed to a lot of sunlight we produce abnormal elastin that causes the skin to stretch and collagen fibres begin to break down. In response to this we produce a large number of enzymes called metalloproteinases or MMPS. This would normally be a good thing as these enzymes try to repair the damage, but it is inefficient and over time, MMPS produced as a result of UV radiation actually results in a break down of collagen and finally wrinkles appear. A study published in 2005 in the Journal for Lipid Research investigated the effect that EPA had on MMPS arising as a result of ultra violet radiation from the sun in human skin and found that EPA inhibited overproduction of MMPS and reduced the amount of damage to the skin. The researchers Kim et al concluded that EPA could possibly prevent as well as treat skin ageing. Then more recently in 2006, Drs Black and Rhodes found that EPA offers protection against sun-induced damage to skin cells by making the skin more resistant to the sun's rays in the first place. Participants taking fish oil showed a higher "minimal erythema dose". This basically means that the lowest amount of radiation needed to produce erythema (an inflammatory effect on the skin or sunburn) was higher for those taking fish oil. These studies show that EPA not only protects the skin, it limits the damage too, but these are not the only benefits of EPA. EPA is known to have powerful anti-inflammatory and anti-thrombotic properties, both of which help to slow down and minimise the effects of ageing and wear and tear on the body. From the moment we are born, we are subjected to a number of environmental pollutants that put pressure on our skin. Oxygen-free radicals from pollution, for example, are everywhere and result in a process known as oxidation. Oxidation leads to an increase in inflammatory responses and too much can cause premature ageing and wrinkles as well as contribute to the development of many skin conditions. The anti-inflammatory properties of EPA can inhibit the production of pro-inflammatory chemical messengers responsible for these inflammatory responses. Increasingly as we grow older, our skin starts to thin out and stretch as collagen fibres lose their elasticity, the skin starts to lose its ability to repair itself and can no longer retain moisture as well as it did. Consequently, many people begin to rely on external lotions and potions to keep the skin moist and supple. EPA can help the blood to flow more efficiently throughout the body and contribute to healthy and radiant looking skin. It is interesting that a lack of Omega 3 fatty acids in the diet manifests itself most noticeably as skin problems. Signs of Omega 3 fatty acid deficiency

- Dry and flaky skin
- Dandruff
- Hard and cracked skin
- Eczema
- Psoriasis
- Acne
- Poor wound healing
- Dull and lifeless looking skin

Most of us are also well aware that stress and anxiety can speed up the ageing process resulting in 'worry lines' as well as more serious conditions and threats to our health. The amazing thing is that EPA has demonstrated considerable success in alleviating depression, anxiety and stress so not only does it help us to remain healthy and look younger with better skin and fewer wrinkles, but it has a 'feel-good' factor too which helps keep those worry lines at bay. Conclusion All this is very exciting, particularly when we consider the amount of time, money and effort spent on the ever-increasing number of products available to help keep us healthy, young and beautiful. The implications are that we can do the same job naturally through diet by taking fish oil supplements containing EPA and benefit not only from healthy more youthful looking skin and all the other documented health-giving properties of EPA but possibly gain a new lease of life too.

About the Author

The Natural Gardening Company is a complete organic gardening source, home of Tomato Heaven. We sell certified organic seeds and certified.

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