

Preface

Good health has been always associated with nutrition and skin quality. It is apparent that we all desire to live longer healthy lives while maintaining a youthful appearance. A vast amount of epidemiological and clinical studies link various nutrients to health benefits in tissues and organs. Recent interest in these relations is triggering progressive reexploration by the dermatological community, particularly where connections between diet and skin have previously been dismissed. A promising volume of publications and findings now support ideas and validate theories that key nutrients are imperative for healthy skin.

Today's global economy urges food scientists and professionals to identify novel ways that can help producers reach consumers. Undoubtedly, in the world of food science the dining table is the predominant route from the food producer to the consumer. However, from any farmer who harvests flaxseeds or soybeans to every ingredient manufacturer who markets tocopherols, polyphenols, or plant extracts, it is apparent that there are many other routes to reach the consumer. The wide variety of non-food consumer products offers numerous examples.

The abundant use of vitamins and antioxidants by the cosmetic industry and their effects on skin care and dermal health has been greatly underestimated, or perhaps unseen, in the food science community, which is wholly focused on dietary use of these nutrients. Thus, not only might topical application of these products further establish the efficacy of these functional ingredients for use on skin, but their ingestion might be even more efficacious.

Current consumer trends have brought anti-aging and consumer products—from nutritional supplements to skin care—into billion dollar ranges that only drugs used to reach. All of these products are tightly connected with the health, wellness, and needs of the modern-day consumer. The main pillars of the marketing power behind these products are the pharmacological activity of “nutraceuticals.”

This book serves to educate and decode the role of vitamins, essential fatty acids, and other nutraceuticals on skin health and their tremendous impact on skin health. In addition, a discussion of the potential role of functional foods is provided. Focus on skin conditions such as acne, dermatitis, dry scaly skin, or alopecia can provide

comprehensive knowledge regarding the relation of nutrition and skin, as can a review of current nutritional clinical studies in dermatological research.

The contributing authors are leaders in their field who concentrate on facts and actual scientific studies. They outline the need for more studies in this new field that is so close to the heart of the consumers in our society. Indeed, the effort here is to concentrate not only on what we know but what we do not (but need to) know to meet consumers' needs. We seek to elucidate not only the potential health benefits that certain diets or nutrients bring to various tissues and organs but also the contributing effects on our skin health and visible condition. It is up to all of us—scientists, doctors, the industry, the sponsoring agencies, the government, and all the people—to find this extra time, effort, and help to address, although not life-threatening, an issue closely associated with the quality of life, health, and well-being.

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Nutrition and Skin

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