

5 STEPS TO HEALTHIER SKIN BY MICHAEL ROIZEN, M.D.



No one wants to give in to wrinkles, sagging, and other aging skin problems without a fight. And avoidance of skin cancer is critical to your well-being. So here are five steps you can take toward younger-looking and healthier skin.

The five steps to younger-looking skin

My staff at RealAge.com has evaluated the research about avoiding aging skin and identified five things that make a difference in how old you look.

- **Step One:** Be smart about your time in the sun.
- **Step Two:** Actively protect your skin.
- **Step Three:** Eat nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
- **Step Four:** Manage stress.
- **Step Five:** Drink water.

Step One: Be smart about your time in the sun

OK, let's look at all the reasons why you should spend time in the sun – it's a mood lifter and a major source of vitamin D, needed to head off many cancers, especially of the mouth, throat, stomach, and colon. So 10 or 20 minutes a day in the sun will provide a day's worth of protection, about 1,500 IU. If you don't get outdoors much, don't forget to eat plenty of the foods that include vitamin D – such as fortified milk, salmon, mackerel, herring, tuna, and sardines.

Because you don't want to trade skin cancer for that sunshine-produced vitamin D, here are tips for enjoying the sun:

- **Minimize your time in direct sunlight.**
Plan your outdoors time for early morning or late afternoon, because the sun's rays are less powerful then.

- **Put on sunscreen just before you leave the house.**
It takes sunscreen 15 to 30 minutes to become effective, giving you time to absorb all the vitamin D you need for the day. Keep applying the sunscreen throughout your time in the sun.
- **Wear sunglasses with 99 percent UV protection.**
Because powerful rays can get to your eyes from above your glasses, it's also smart to wear a sun hat.

Step Two: Actively protect your skin

You can slow skin aging by using moisturizer to keep your skin soft. And, don't forget the sunscreen!

Step Three: Eat nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day

Antioxidants – which will give your skin a healthy glow – abound in fruits and vegetables, especially those with deep green, yellow, orange, and red colors. Eat at least four fruits and five vegetables a day to keep your skin looking good. Reduce your intake of simple or high-glycemic index carbohydrates, such as enriched bread or flour products, processed and refined foods, candy, and soft drinks.

Great for healthy skin:

- Foods with vitamins A and C, zinc, lean proteins, and essential fatty acids
- The skin on fruits and vegetables – when washed well
- Raw or lightly cooked vegetables

(continued on next page)

HUMANA
Guidance when you need it most

- Complex or low-glycemic index carbohydrates, such as whole-grain breads and cereals, and legumes
- Healthy fats for skin cell regeneration – avocados, nuts, salmon, and flaxseeds
- Colorful fruits and vegetables rich in antioxidants
- Whole-grain breads and cereals rich in magnesium and B vitamins to help regenerate skin cells

Step Four: Manage stress

Whether your daily stress is about finances, relationships, lack of sleep, or a combination of these and other stressors, you need to take active steps to find solutions. Until then, manage your stress with good-for-you comfort foods, meditation, and exercise.

- **Eat comfort foods:** True comfort foods include:
 1. Berries – vitamin C to help you fight stress
 2. Guacamole – B vitamins for your nerves and brain cells
 3. Mixed nuts – B and E vitamins and zinc
 4. Oranges – vitamin C to soothe you
 5. Asparagus – Folic acid to lighten your mood
- **Meditate:** Do it every day, before bedtime or whenever your stress gets overwhelming. Find a quiet place to sit comfortably without being disturbed, close your eyes, and clear your mind of all thoughts. Try repeating a simple sound (like “om”) over and over to keep distracting thoughts out of your mind. You can focus

on your breathing; you can pray. Whatever it takes to have at least five minutes of silence in your day will help you manage your stress.

- **Exercise:** Exercising regularly is another great way to reduce stress. I recommend walking 30 minutes a day.

Step Five: Drink water

Drink water several times a day to moisturize your skin from the inside out, to help keep your skin hydrated and plump, and maintain its elasticity and suppleness. You’ll have less drooping, less drying, and less damage. Alcohol, coffee, tea, and sodas don’t count – they can actually rob your skin of moisture, so they should be limited in your diet.

Bottom line:

The payoff to actively and consistently following these five steps is a more youthful appearance and healthier skin.

Find more skin-healthy food selections with the RealAge Vitamin and Nutrient Best Bets.

<http://www.realage.com/NutritionCenter/VitaminsNutrients.aspx>

For personalized advice on improving your skin through your diet, take the RealAge Skin Care Assessment.

<http://www.realage.com/RealBeauty/SkinCare/Land.aspx>

HUMANA
Guidance when you need it most