



Are there foods I can eat that will help boost my metabolism?

Suzie Sawyer says Foods can help boost the metabolism for different reasons. Protein-rich foods, which include meat, fish, eggs, beans and dairy, use energy in the form of calories to digest them. Some foods and drinks are also known as 'thermogenic' as they speed up the body's metabolism. Green tea seems to have this effect, as do chilli peppers and ginger. Green tea is also high in antioxidants, so drink three cups daily, if possible.



The thyroid gland is one of the main controllers of metabolic rate throughout the body - it controls cellular metabolism. Selenium is one of the key trace minerals needed to produce thyroid hormones. However, selenium is frequently deficient in our foods due to reduced levels in soils, therefore make sure you supplement with a high-quality multivitamin and mineral supplement to ensure you're getting enough.

Is it true that drinking water before a meal will help me lose weight?

Suzie Sawyer says Yes, it can but maybe not for the reasons you think! Firstly, we sometimes mistake hunger for thirst, which can encourage more calories to be consumed which are actually not needed. Always think about how much water you have drunk throughout the day before reaching for food. Additionally, if you drink plenty of water about half an hour before a meal, it will slightly blunt feelings of hunger, therefore less calories will be eaten if you're watching your weight. Try to avoid drinking too much water with a meal though as it dilutes stomach acid, which



is an essential part of digestion.

There is also limited research to suggest that drinking cold water requires energy in the form of calories to bring it up to blood temperature level. Obviously, this can happen quite quickly internally and the effects are not long-lasting, maybe only for about an hour.



Suzie Sawyer is a clinical nutritionist and an advisor to supplement range Alivel, which contains a unique blend of 26 fruits and vegetables. feelaliveuk.com

Beauty SOS

Get a healthy glow by feeding your hair skin and nails, says nutritionist **Suzie Sawyer**

How we look and feel can only ever reflect what's within. All the creams, potions and lotions will make very little difference to the condition of hair, skin and nails if they are not being fed from within, and this is something many people forget.

Beauty really does start from the inside out - even marginal nutrient deficiencies can affect outward appearance. However, in a recent survey by Alive! the multivitamin and mineral specialists in the UK, it was found that a staggering 31 per cent of the population were confused about what constitutes a healthy diet. It follows, therefore, that people will also struggle to know what to feed their hair, skin and nails.

FEEDING OUR SKIN

Skin is actually the largest body organ and accounts for about 15 per cent of body weight, so there's much to feed. However,

by having a better understanding of what the body needs, it makes the decision about what to eat somewhat easier. First up is protein, it's the body's building block. Not only is protein essential for the immune system, growth, repair and hormone function, it makes up a large part of body structure. Indeed, the protein keratin is most abundant in hair, skin and nails. Protein-rich sources include poultry, fish, eggs, beans, soya produce, dairy and meat. Whilst there has been a



big push-back on eating meat, partly due to environmental issues, having a lean, grass-fed, organic steak occasionally does wonders for your extremities. Indeed, people often think that poor nail condition is down to a zinc deficiency but it can be down to a lack of iron, and meat is the richest source of this.

The bad news is many of us are guilty of shunning food groups like meat and so our diets are short of iron. Bridge these dietary gaps with a daily multivitamin and multiminerals supplement.

SKIN AND DIGESTIVE FITNESS

If the digestive system isn't working smoothly then every other body system is going to struggle. For example, if you suffer from constipation, the liver will have to work harder to complete its normal detoxification processes. This will lead to low energy, but also poor skin condition; you'll be more susceptible to break-outs

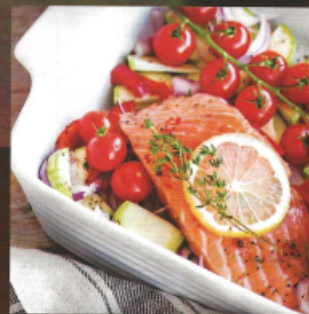
"Aim to drink six to eight glasses of water daily, and the skin will really benefit"

and hair will certainly not glow if the digestive system isn't running smoothly. If everything's feeling sluggish, then start by increasing fibre content - whole grains, cruciferous vegetables, nuts, seeds and beans (also good protein sources) to see if everything starts to move better. Frequent bloating can often be caused by poor digestive enzyme secretions, so do invest in a digestive enzyme supplement and take it with each meal. Imbalanced gut bacteria, with depleted friendly flora can also lead to constipation, so it's worth taking a probiotic supplement regularly. Look out for stress, sugar, alcohol,

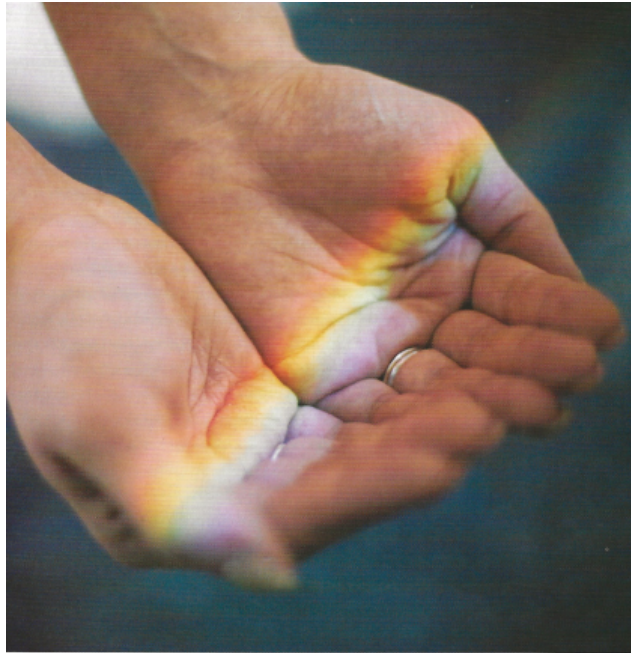
medication - they all knock out the good bacteria. A quality probiotic can have a really positive effect in getting everything back in balance. Constipation may not be something we like to talk about, but the fact is that digestive matters affect the way our skin looks.

GOOD SKIN FATS

Skin, hair and nails can frequently seem dry and lifeless. The body needs the essential omega-3 oils found predominantly in oily fish, to maintain good hydration at cellular levels but also to boost metabolism, manage hormone function and feed the



brain. According to National Diet and Nutrition Surveys (NDNS), the population are certainly starved of oily fish. Current recommendations are for two portions of fish per week (one to be oily) equating to 140g. In the 19-64 age group, we're barely managing 54g per week. This may be partly down to people's dislike of fish. Conversely, the Alive! survey found only 15 per cent of the population take an omega-3 fish oil supplement. Whilst flaxseeds and pumpkin seeds are good sources of omega-3s, they're not nearly as well metabolised as fish, so it's worth trying to fall in love with salmon to keep your levels up!



WATERING OUR SKIN

Being properly hydrated is very important. Aim to drink six to eight glasses of water daily, (more is needed if you exercise regularly) and the skin will really benefit. It's also worth bearing in mind that just drinking more water is certainly not the only answer to glowing skin - the body still needs a raft of nutrients to function optimally. Coconut oil is one of the best moisturisers you can find. It makes a fabulous all-over skin and hair moisturiser. It will also soothe any skin eruptions or patches of eczema. It's a very cost-effective beauty SOS.



"Beauty really does start from the inside out"

TACKLING TOXINS

We live in harsh environmental conditions with free radicals attacking the body from all directions. Sunshine, pollution, cigarette smoke and environmental toxins are all outwardly punishing the body, especially the skin, but they also overload the body internally so it has to work harder to detoxify. Free radicals need to be quashed by antioxidants and whilst the body has its own antioxidant enzyme systems to do this job for us, they all need particular nutrients. One such example is our master antioxidant enzyme, glutathione, which needs the trace mineral selenium to function effectively.

On top of the outward battering, diets high in fried or fatty foods, alcohol, pharmaceutical drugs, and lots of sugar also create more free radicals which the body then has to work hard to evict. Indeed, the liver has to work even harder to protect the body. Free radical damage will also speed up

the ageing process causing wrinkles, as well as making us more vulnerable to degenerative disease.

The good news is that there are plenty of foods high in antioxidants which are also nutrient dense, helping plug deficiencies. And with 52 per cent of those polled in the Alive! survey saying they suffered all the time from brittle nails, and 33 per cent saying they suffered every day from skin problems, the body would seem to be lacking the right foods. Great sources of antioxidants include berry fruits, red grapes, broccoli, watermelon and kale. In fact, all fruits and vegetables contain antioxidants in some form. Eating a varied and colourful diet (think about eating a rainbow every day) is the easiest way of ensuring you're getting the antioxidants you need on a daily basis. The deeper the colour of the fruit or vegetable, the more antioxidants they tend to have. And if you have a hectic lifestyle and are guilty of not having your five fruit and vegetables a day, plug those vitamin and mineral gaps with a daily supplement.

LAST WORD

Lastly, we all know how 'grey' our skin can look when we're tired, run-down and struggling to get some much-needed shut-eye. The Alive! survey found one in 14 people never get a good night's sleep. If this resonates with you, then it's time to act and prioritise your sleep. Get a good bedtime routine going: turn off electronic devices two hours before bedtime, take a warm bath with lavender and read a good book. Sometimes it's best to get back to basics if you want to glow inside and out.

Our Experts



Suzie Sawyer is a clinical nutritionist and an advisor to Alive! - the only nutrient supplement range that contains a unique blend of 26 fruits and vegetables as well as a host of vital vitamins and minerals. feelaliveuk.com