

Choice

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The Leading Publication for Complementary Health, Education and Wellbeing

let your inner
goddess glow

Ayurvedic Skincare

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**Your Health and
Wellbeing Success
Starts Here!**

Are you a health-conscious consumer, looking to come into the industry or looking for a suitable treatment? Find out what the experts say and read.

Letter from the Editor



With the dark nights and cold winter weather upon us, even the most positive of us sometimes suffer from a case of the 'winter blues', which is characterised by low energy levels, short temper, vanishing motivation and mild depression.

Yoga is fantastic for naturally lifting your mood as its deep breathing techniques bring balance to the nervous system while the poses themselves work to reduce stress hormones (like cortisol) and trigger the release of your body's natural feel-good chemicals (serotonin and endorphins).

Eating healthy natural foods is important all year round, but in the winter months it is particularly important. Your body requires certain nutrients to function properly, fight off colds and illnesses and give you the energy you need to fight depression in the gloomy months.

From all the team at Choice Health Mag we wish you all a healthy, happy and prosperous 2012.

Happy reading

Angela

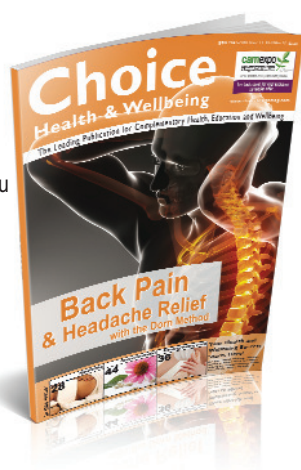
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Ayurvedic skincare

let your inner goddess glow

It's true! Beauty is not just skin deep but is the essence of our being. Ever seen people with radiant skin, lustrous eyes, calm disposition and a confident stride and wonder what their secret is? Following the natural and effective principles of Ayurveda will put you on track to feeling healthy and looking beautiful.

Ayurvedic diet, nutrition, massage, facials, yoga and lifestyle choices can bring out your inner beauty as well as address more chronic skin health issues. Sushruta Samhita, an Ayurvedic scripture dating as far back as 5,000 years, mentions various herbs, routines and recipes to maintain one's beauty without spending a fortune on chemically produced products.

Our skin has a tendency to become dry, rough and irritated as we get older and during certain seasons. According to Ayurveda this causes an increase in vata in the body. Dry skin, cracking joints, brittle nails and falling hair are all signs that vata is aggravated. As we go into the autumn and early winter, vata is prone to become aggravated and can be further increased by a vata-provoking diet and increased levels of mental stress.

Detox your body and mind

Any good beauty routine would start with an inner detoxification process to first free the body from 'ama' or toxins by strengthening the digestive fire (agni). A strong agni helps the nutrients to be optimally absorbed and the essence to reach down to the cellular level, instantly reflecting in the feeling of lightness, lustre of the skin and eyes, and mental clarity. Starting your day with a mug of ginger and lemon tea is an excellent way to detoxify and cleanse the body. Drink plenty of warm water throughout the day. Avoid heavy, cold and processed foods and instead favour a light, warm and nourishing diet. Kitchari (rice and mung lentils cooked in little clarified butter (ghee) with various spices like turmeric, cumin seeds, ginger etc) is an ideal recipe for a simple detoxification. Herbal compounds such as triphala or trikatu are effective in cleansing toxins from the digestive system.

Food, glorious food

Seasonal vegetables with high water content such as lettuce, carrots, cucumber, daikon radish, asparagus, fennel, avocado, pomegranate, are great for hydration of the skin as well as being suitable for all dosha types, ultimately we want to get plenty of fresh veggies in the diet. Adding oil-rich nuts and seeds into your diet will also improve the condition of your skin. Walnuts and



almonds are a particular favourite, eaten after being soaked and blanched. To prevent vata accumulation, opt for warm, grounding and cooked foods, including oats, root vegetables, dahls, soups and stews, particularly in the vata seasons.

Balance your doshas

Ayurveda advises following a diet that suits your body type (vata, pitta, kapha). In general, foods with 'sattvic' qualities are rejuvenating, anti-ageing and enhance the natural glow of the skin, these foods include, ghee, blanched and soaked almonds, dates, aloe, fresh seasonal fruits (when eaten alone). Regular, timely meals and appropriate portions should be maintained. Periodic fasts can also help to strengthen the digestive fire.

It's tea time

Manage vata by staying hydrated and keep your skin younger looking by ensuring an abundance of warm liquids throughout the day. A variety of herbal teas can enkindle a healthy digestion. Ginger, lemon, honey, fennel, cinnamon can all contribute to a radiating glow.

Keep on moving

Exercise is essential to prevent the body from becoming stagnant and cold. Keep the blood circulating, digestion optimised, lymph moving and oxygenation of all the cells. Sweating helps release toxins through the skin. Choose a form of exercise that you enjoy such as dancing, yoga, walking etc.

The herbal garden

A whole array of herbal remedies are available to

support beautiful skin. This can include turmeric, aloe vera, sandalwood, manjistha, sariva and particularly neem (azadirachta indica), traditionally used in Ayurveda to purify the blood and support the immune system. It is considered to be the herb of choice for maintaining glowing skin, as well as support for healthy blood glucose levels.

Deep moisturisation

Massage is an essential element of any Ayurveda health regime since touch is as healing as food is considered nutritious, and oils are a natural moisturiser. A 10–15-minute daily self-massage encourages youthful looks, slowing down the ageing process and bring about balance with oils tailored to your dosha type. Ideally a herbal steam would follow to help the oils penetrate into skin, helping to wash off any toxins that may be drawn out to the skin. A warm bath or shower is a good alternative.

Ayurvedic treatments

Various external therapeutic treatments can also naturally enhance the condition of our skin. These can include treatments such as marma body and head massage, which help to release any blocked energy in the body. Various herbal facial and body scrubs known as udvartana use exotic herbal powders such as sandalwood and turmeric with prepared herbal oils. Herbal pastes and face packs are also used to penetrate beneficial herbs through the skin. These methods were traditionally used as bridal beauty treatments to cleanse the skin and leave a soft and lustrous glow.

Breathe in and release

Stimulation of oxygen and flow of fresh blood to the surface of the facial skin as well as throughout the body can be maintained through the practice of yoga, and postures such as downward facing dog for whole body stretching. Lion's pose for circulation to head, neck and face, think of it as a long-term wrinkle cream and forward bends to keep the digestion strong. Alternate nostril pranayama breathing amongst others has the power to cleanse the subtle channels of the body and mind through the route of increased prana (life force).

Rest and recovery

Vata has the qualities of dryness, lightness and coldness and when aggravated, vata can create restlessness and an overactive mind leading to disturbed sleep and even insomnia, which is not conducive for healthy skin. Ayurveda advocates getting off to bed around 10–10:30pm with a 7–8 hour sleep. If you are having trouble sleeping try having a hot milk drink with spices such as nutmeg, cardamom and almonds. Give yourself a warm sesame oil foot massage and do some relaxing pranayama breathing exercises. Meditation works on the subtle channels by focusing on inner peace and happiness radiating true inner beauty. **CHW**

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