

## Nutrition and the Skin, Part 2 - Diet

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In the first part of this two-part series (*DC*, June 17, on line at <http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/20/13/01.html>), we reviewed the supplements that can reduce environmental skin damage. This article will show how food can affect your skin.

In a study of 452 elderly Greeks, Swedes and Australians,<sup>1</sup> researchers analyzed sun-exposed areas of subjects' skin for degrees of cutaneous skin damage. They then analyzed the subjects' diet and compared the results. Regardless of genetic background, there was an association between skin wrinkling and the types of foods people regularly consumed. There was not a ranking as to best and worst foods. (Therefore, the following lists are not in order.)

Protective Foods	Nonprotective Foods
vegetables	red meat
fruits	butter
nuts	margarine
olive oil	whole milk
legumes	soft drinks
yogurt	cocktails
eggs	potatoes
whole grains	cakes
water	pastries

I was not surprised that the protective foods tended to be higher in nutrient density, antioxidants and fiber, and would be considered anti-inflammatory, while the nonprotective foods were generally higher in saturated fats, sugar and empty (low-nutrient) calories.

This study does not include lifestyle factors. Generally, people who eat more foods from the protective category also have fewer "bad" habits (i.e., lack of exercise and alcohol and tobacco use) and more "good" habits (such as regular exercise and lower usage of harmful substances), which also will slow biological markers of aging.

Finally, please note that this study looked at whole foods. Don't be surprised if the folks who sell fruit and vegetable pills unfairly extrapolate these results and claim their products help prevent wrinkles, when in fact, there is no evidence to support that claim.

### Reference

1. Purba M, Kouris-Blavos A, et al. Skin wrinkling: Can food make a difference? *Journal American College Nutrition* 2001;20(1):71-80.

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