

10 Healthy Foods That Are Also Great for the Skin

Nutrition

Nutrition A to Z

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You know you need to put on sunscreen 20 minutes [before you leave the house](#), but somehow sunburns still happen. Weird.

You don't have to lock yourself indoors in the name of skin safety. In addition to slathering on sunscreen, wearing protective clothing (think SPF clothing, hats, and sunglasses), and sitting under an umbrella on the beach, certain foods can also help protect against many long-term effects of sun exposure.

These foods, which are rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, may help boost skin health and elasticity, and delay the signs of aging. What they don't do is stand in for UVA and UVB, so keep applying those full-spectrum SPF products.

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Tomatoes: Chopped into salads, diced into salsas, or pureed into spaghetti sauce, these ripe round reds are rich in [lycopene](#), an antioxidant shown to protect against long-term effects of sun damage.

Chia Seeds: Ch-ch-ch-chia seeds are a great source of [omega-3 fatty acids](#), which can help fortify skin cells and potentially protect the skin from early signs of aging caused by sun exposure and damage. The jury is still out on whether chia pets have the same effect.

Avocado: Even though fat still gets a bad rap these days, avocados are packed with the good kind of fit: [monounsaturated fats](#). These good-for-you fats can help skin cells be more resistant to damage.

Red Bell Peppers: Oranges might be most commonly thought of as the best source of vitamin C. However, one large red bell pepper has three times as much of this nutrient than the citrus fruit. [Vitamin C](#) has been shown to keep your skin safe and reduce signs of aging.

Almonds paired with vitamin C-packed fruits: Go nuts with almonds, a superfood that's not only a great source of healthy fats and protein, but also vitamin E. Combine a small handful of almonds with a vitamin C-rich fruit — papaya, guava, and strawberries are good seasonal summer picks — and you'll have a winning combo of vitamin E and C that [one study](#) shows could reduce the skin's reaction to sunburn.

Sweet Potatoes: Bake up sweet potato chips for a crunchy way to take in high levels of beta-carotene, a naturally occurring pigment in plants that contributes to their vibrant colors (yup, it's also in carrots). [One study](#) revealed that participants who consumed flavanols, including beta-carotene, for 10–12 weeks showed a decrease in sensitivity toward UV-induced sunburn. What's up, Doc?

Salmon: Kill two sun-beating birds with one stone. Salmon keeps you covered with its omega-3s, and it's also high in [astaxanthin](#) (pronounced asta-zan-thin). [One study](#) suggests that astaxanthin can help protect against negative side effects that too much sunbasking can have on the skin such as sagging and wrinkling. We're more than a little skeptical about this... but that doesn't make salmon any less healthy.

Dark Chocolate: Dark chocolate is filled with [flavonoids](#), which can help ward off the skin damage that can happen if you dozed in the sun on your beach towel for too long. And, for the last time, no, we're not sharing.

Grapes: Studies show the [antioxidants](#) found in grapes can reduce damaging skin conditions. Pop some seedless grapes in the freezer for a few hours before you hit the pool or beach, and you'll have a tasty, sweet treat to tote that's just as refreshing as popsicles but far less melty.

Herbs: Herbs of all kinds — basil, rosemary, sage, and thyme — can act as a barrier for skin ailments, according to [research](#) cited by *Science Daily*. Grow your own this summer, or grab what's in season at the farmer's market.