

# OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Katie Gravesen, DC

## Stay Wrinkle Free ... Naturally!

*Everywhere you turn these days, there's an ad promising unlined, youthful skin from a new lotion, pill or procedure. But what the advertisers don't want you to know is that youthful skin is possible without all the pain, pennies and poison.*

*The real secret to healthy, radiant and wrinkle-free skin is an all-natural prevention strategy featuring proper nutrition, optimum hydration and health-boosting activities like stress reduction and smoking cessation.*



Wrinkles are primarily the result of gravity. They can also be sparked by collagen changes: the fibrous protein making up the body's connective tissue that links bones, muscles and tendons. The changes, in this case, refer to loss of elastic tissue support. Other wrinkle instigators include ultraviolet (UV) light, lack of hydration and smoke and pollutants (*West J Med* 1997;167:428).

While Dr. Gravesen can't help patients turn back the hands of time, regular chiropractic care can assist by boosting the body's immune system and promoting a healthy glow from inside out!

Dr. Gravesen wants patients to know



that there are numerous all-natural ways to prevent wrinkles without resorting to drugs, toxins and scam solutions.

The following are just a few suggestions by Dr. Gravesen to keep time from ravaging your skin.

### Relax

"If you don't stop scowling, your face is going to freeze that way!"

For generations, mothers have repeated that phrase to their children. And you know what? The threat does have merit!

According to researchers, "The pattern for hyperdynamic facial lines — furrows caused by the repeated pull on the skin of underlying facial muscles — is usually established by the age of six years." (*West J Med* 1997;167:428.) However, frowning isn't the only instigator. So is continued raising of the eyebrows and squinting.

Although expressing emotions is healthy, living in a constant state of stress may wreak havoc on your complexion. And not just due to adopting scrunched-up expressions.

Stress speeds the aging process by elevating the level of cortisol in the blood: the "fight or flight" hormone.



In younger people, these stress-related spikes return to baseline levels rather quickly.

But the older a person gets, the longer it takes. Worse yet, consistently elevated levels of cortisol weaken the immune system while increasing muscle atrophy, calcium loss, high cholesterol and the risk of diabetes due to elevated glucose levels (*Endocr Rev* 1986;7:284-301).

### Kick the Habit

Among 109 smokers, heavy smokers (more than 50 packs per year) were 4.7 times more likely to be wrinkled than nonsmokers (*Am Fam Physician* 1991;44:615).

One plausible explanation is that smoking "produces changes in the tiny blood vessels of the face and can cause damage to the skin proteins, collagen and elastin." (*Ann Intern Med* 1991;114:840.) Elastin helps maintain skin's resilience and youthfulness.

When UV rays and cigarette smoke mingle, the results are even more disastrous. In a study involving 48 men and 35 women, those who logged more than two hours of sun exposure per day — in addition to smoking 35

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packs (or more) of cigarettes each year — were 11.4 times more likely to develop wrinkles than nonsmokers with less sun exposure (*Photodermatol Photoimmunol Photomed* 2001;17:178-83).

### Use Natural Sunscreen

In a study of 109 participants, a lifetime of high sun exposure (at least 50,000 hours) was associated with 3.1-fold heightened risk of excessive wrinkling (*Am Fam Physician* 1991;44:615). But before you start slathering on the sunscreen, consider this: The majority of today's products are loaded with toxic ingredients.

Because commercial sunscreens contain potential carcinogenic chemicals, doctors of chiropractic suggest patients shop for all-natural sunscreens. These natural products may contain green tea, vitamin E, shea butter or white camella oil. Titanium dioxide, an all-natural mineral, also helps to deflect UV rays from skin surfaces. And animal studies show that "topical almond oil is capable of preventing the structural damage caused by UV irradiation" while slowing the photoaging process: aging related specifically to the sun's effects (*J Cosmet Dermatol* 2007;6:14-9).

### Stay Hydrated

Staying well hydrated is one of the best ways to ward off wrinkles.

How much water is enough? Experts suggest drinking half your body weight in ounces each day. For instance, if you weigh 140 pounds, that equates to 70 ounces of water.

### Add Antioxidants

Environmental factors, such as UV radiation and toxins, trigger skin to produce "free radical" chemicals that damage the skin's DNA. The consequences of this destructive process include premature aging, immune suppression and skin cancer.

Dietary antioxidants, however, hold the power to halt free radicals in their tracks. For example, carotenoids —

pigments in yellow, orange and red vegetables — are particularly effective. "The uptake of carotenoids in food can lead to an accumulation [of antioxidants] in the skin. On the other hand, stress, illness and UV-radiation can reduce the concentration of antioxidant substances in the skin." (*Hautarzt* 2006;57:286, 288-90.)

Significant studies also support the benefits of topically applied vitamin A on aging and sun-damaged skin (*Dermatol Nurs* 2003;15:75).

Vitamin A derivatives called retinoids easily penetrate the skin. Researchers in Switzerland note that retinoids renew skin cells, act as UV filters, prevent oxidative stress, control bacteria and minimize the aging process (*Dermatol Ther* 2006;19:289-96).

But here's something truly astonishing. According to research, retinoids not only repair — but may also *prevent* — the photoaging of skin "and be beneficial in the treatment of intrinsically aged skin." (*Dermatol Ther* 2006;19:297-305.)

The potent antioxidants in green tea also work to block and repair skin damage caused by sun exposure (*Am J Chin Med* 2005;33:535-46). The same is true for pomegranates.

### Fuel Up on Anti-Wrinkle Foods

An international study of 450 men and women — age 70 and up — included residents of Australia, Greece and Sweden. All subjects recorded their eating habits on questionnaires and agreed to microscopic measurements of wrinkling on sun-exposed skin. "The more vegetables, legumes (such as peas and beans), fish, olive oil and low-fat milk products the subjects reported consuming, the less wrinkling they had. The more meat, sugar, margarine, butter and other whole-milk products they consumed, the more wrinkling they suffered." (*Dermatol Nurs* 2002;14:338.)

A diet loaded with fish rich in omega-3 antioxidants is also thought to protect against wrinkles.

### Ask About Supplements

There are also a number of supplements on the market worthy of discussion with your doctor of chiropractic. For instance, persimmon leaf. This unlikely anti-wrinkle hero has a substantial amount of chemical compounds called tannins. Tannins can be used as "natural materials or additives for human skin owing to their beneficial biologic functions, including the anti-wrinkle effect and the inhibition of skin problems." (*Dermatol Surg* 2005;31:848-54.)

Grape seed extract, green tea extract and omega-3 supplements may also work wonders.

### The Secret to Wrinkle-Free Skin May Be Hiding in Your Cupboard

It may sound low-tech, but homemade masks and creams derived from blending everyday foods may be more potent beauty aids than expensive designer formulations.

Researchers suspect that concoctions including the following foods provide the greatest wrinkle-busting power:

- ✓ Avocado
- ✓ Honey
- ✓ Mango
- ✓ Olive oil
- ✓ Green tea
- ✓ Cucumber
- ✓ Yogurt
- ✓ Berries
- ✓ Kiwi

### Choose Organic

When possible opt for organic foods. Pesticide residue found on non-organic fare can be damaging to skin.

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