



# Feed your FACE

Fix your summer skin woes  
and give your immune system  
a boost at the same time

**U**nless you're lucky enough to stumble across the fountain of youth, reversing the signs of ageing and maintaining good health ultimately begins with what you choose to put in your mouth. But, if what you're piling on your plate doesn't properly support your immune system and gut, you may find that your face will start to give away clues about your health.

## Pigmentation problems

There are many benefits to soaking up the sun, but warm, sunny days are also the perfect conditions for premature ageing. Rightly so, you'll probably already be diligently lathering on anti-ageing serums and creams. Although a rigid skincare routine is definitely worth pursuing, clinical nutritionist Suzie Sawyer ([feelaliveuk.com](http://feelaliveuk.com)) says food can also be a wonderful way to heal your complexion from the inside out. "Rich in lycopene, tomatoes are loaded with health-protective antioxidants that can help reduce hyperpigmentation," says Suzie. Alternatively, Suzie recommends cutting a tomato in half and rubbing the juices across your skin, but it's best to include plenty in your diet first of all.

Now, we're all aware of the importance of eating enough fresh fruit and leafy vegetables, but when it comes to reducing pigmentation and ensuring your vitamin C levels remain optimal, one fruit takes the crown – the humble orange. Like all citrus fruits, oranges are an excellent source of vitamin C, which counteracts damage caused by overexposure to pollution or sun damage. Oranges owe their vivid colour to a pigment known as beta-carotene (also known as pro-vitamin A) which helps combat the visible signs of ageing. Other great ingredients with similar levels of beta-carotene are carrots, pumpkin, sweet potato



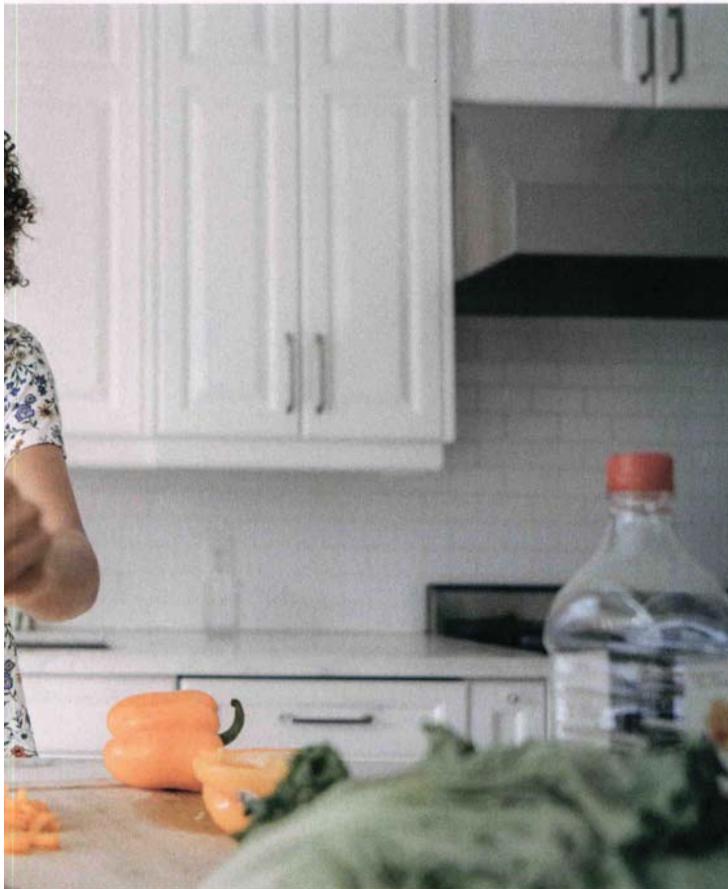
and all kinds of squash, while fruits with similar levels of vitamin C include lemons, kiwis and papaya.

## Skin superfoods

Sugar-laden foods can leave you with a blemished, dry complexion, but creamy highlighters aren't the only ways to fix a dull appearance. "Collagen is a structural protein within the skin and is essential if you're yearning for naturally glowing skin," says Suzie. Poultry and eggs are the best foods to encourage collagen production, according to Suzie. "Additionally, avocados are rich in vitamin E and berries – specifically strawberries, which are full of alpha hydroxy acid and that helps to get rid of dead skin cells, boost collagen, reduce wrinkles, and lighten skin tone," says nutritionist Dr Vijay Murthy ([ayuwave.com](http://ayuwave.com)).

A list of skin superfoods wouldn't be complete without oily fish. The omega-3 fats that they contain are crucial for the health





from infection and can even stimulate the formation of antibodies to fight off disease. The only issue is that your body can't produce vitamin C on its own, so it must come from the foods you eat on a daily basis. "Foods known for their high vitamin C content are red and green peppers, strawberries, broccoli and guava fruit," explains Suzie. Vitamin A helps your body regulate its immune system and can help protect it against infection. Some examples of foods rich in vitamin A include sweet potatoes, broccoli, red bell peppers, and carrots. Plus, the prebiotic fibre in vegetables and fruit supports and feeds the probiotics that live in your gastrointestinal tract, helping them grow and thrive. Fish, poultry, whole grains, eggs and pork are rich in vitamin B6, which plays a vital role in cell replication – essential for immune system functioning.

Whether you're trying to avoid getting sick, fighting a cold or plumping up your complexion, drinking plenty of water is a must. Downing fruit juices when you're under the weather will only lead to a blood sugar crash. Since your body's needs increase when you're fighting infection, drinking your daily minimum plus a few extra glasses can help. Eating chicken soups or stews are not only a good source of protein, but can also feel soothing, while the heat helps open up any congestion.

### Microbiome matters

Want a healthy gut? Your microbiome is a complicated mix of bacteria that lives in your digestive system as well as on your face and skin, and what you eat every day directly impacts and shapes its health. Research around probiotics is always changing, but maintaining your microbiome with certain foods is a good place to start if you're looking to improve its health. "Eating a variety of fibre-rich foods including plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes will help keep your bowels running smoothly while feeding the good gut bacteria, which is essential for not just your complexion but your overall wellbeing," explains Suzie.

If you've never tried sauerkraut before it can take some getting used to. But before you turn your nose up at it, you should know that it helps improve probiotic colonies alongside providing natural digestive enzyme support. As Dr Vijay Murthy explains, sauerkraut also contains fibre which aids digestion, balances blood sugar, and can help lower cholesterol. Adding fibre to your meal also makes it more satisfying and keeps you fuller for longer.

of the skin. They help to strengthen the cell membranes, facilitating the passage of water and nutrients in, while keeping toxins out. Insufficient fat in the diet can lead to skin cells being less able to retain water and losing their plumpness, resulting in a dry and lifeless complexion. Omega-3 fats are also anti-inflammatory and can help with skin issues such as acne, eczema and psoriasis.

### Beauty boosters

When everything is ticking over nicely with your immune system, your skin reaps the benefits. However, when your immune function becomes weakened or impaired, it can sometimes spell disaster for your face, which can become more vulnerable to inflammation, hypersensitivity and other problems. Consuming foods with plenty of vitamin A, C and B6 is key if you wish to avoid succumbing to countless sniffles and colds. Vitamin C can help protect your body



"I'VE RECENTLY CUT DAIRY FROM MY DIET TO HELP WITH MY ADULT ACNE. SO FAR, IT'S WORKING!"

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