

Holistic Dermatology

Inner Health, Radiant Skin

by Linda Sechrist



Holistic skin care practices are simple, healthy and sustainably good for people and the planet because they follow nature's example.

Medical Doctor Alan M. Dattner, a 35-year pioneer in the field of holistic dermatology, faithfully follows nature's principles in supporting skin health. His book, *Radiant Skin from the Inside Out: The Holistic Dermatologist's Guide to Healing Your Skin Naturally*, maps out how skin reflects

the body's healthy or unhealthy organs and systems.

Finding the internal root cause of problems on the skin, the body's largest organ, takes time to investigate. Dattner, who practices in New York City and New Rochelle, New York, and considers himself a "skin detective", says that although his forensic work continues to

expand, he still begins his sleuthing by taking a detailed and comprehensive history that yields clues for solving health puzzles and points him in the direction of what's causing problems.

Some patients with acne also have symptoms of bloating, gastrointestinal issues or chronic bowel disease. Others may have traveled to another country where they contracted diarrhea from a parasite or foreign bacteria that upset their intestinal microbiome.

Skin outbreaks can also be the result of food sensitivities or food allergies. "I make patients aware of the issues underlying their skin problems so that they understand the connection between internal health and skin. Then they can make conscious food choices," says Dattner.

Diet is a critical aspect of healthy skin. Food sensitivities can cause inflammation that can show up on the skin, he explains.

Dattner incorporates several diagnostic techniques and remedies from other medical traditions, including herbal, homeopathic, and ayurvedic. A tongue diagnosis he uses is taken from Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). He uses Applied Kinesiology to refine his therapeutic choices as the results align with his knowledge of dermatology, immunology and integrative medicine.

Janice MacKenzie, acupuncture practitioner, teacher and author of *Discovering the Five Elements: One Day at a Time*, views the skin as a third lung, because it breathes. "If the organs of

elimination aren't working well—large intestine, liver and kidney—then toxins leave through skin, another organ of elimination," says MacKenzie, who practices in Perkasio, Pennsylvania.

"When constipation leaves toxins to be reabsorbed into the blood and recirculated through the liver, the body, out of desperation, seeks ways to get rid of toxins through the skin. This can result in eczema, psoriasis, rashes, boils and acne," notes MacKenzie.

In TCM, the facial redness of rosacea originates in a heating of the blood caused by toxicity. An inflammatory condition of excess energy and toxicity in the stomach travels upward through the stomach energy meridian that runs from the eye to the second toe. It's supposed to flow downward through the mouth, throat and intestines and out.

Elina Fedatova, cosmetic chemist, aesthetician, owner of spas in Chicago and Kalamazoo, Michigan, and formulator of Elina Organics, addresses skin as an aspect of a whole healthy body. Her product line is created wholly from organic plant extracts and essential oils, made in batches every two weeks. These purely natural products can be ingested without harmful effects. "Formulas are made using holistic principles and adjusted for each season," says Fedatova.

"Disorders of the skin often reflect an endocrine imbalance—endocrine systems play a vital part in good health and may need to be addressed for health optimization. The field of medicine involved with hormone balance, often called integrative medicine, is controversial even though so-called conventional treatment is frequently based on habit and myth. Although hormone balance is important, nothing in medicine occurs separately from all other lifestyle decisions—nutrition, exercise, weight maintenance and stress reduction are all equally essential in creating good health for every organ system, including the skin."

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She agrees with Dattner, "Protecting skin from the inside with a nutritious diet that benefits the entire body is vital, as important as keeping the skin's surface clean." In caring for skin from the outside, a gentle exfoliation that can be done at home three times a week using a honey mask is the first step. Skin cells produced in the deepest layer gradually push their way to the epidermis every 30 days and die. Dead

cells pile up unevenly and give the skin's surface a dry, dull appearance. Treatment serums, moisturizing lotions and eye and neck creams are necessary elements of a complete facial skin care regimen, as is a natural sunscreen with zinc oxide or titanium dioxide.

"Using skincare practices and products that follow nature's example are the perfect external complement to good internal health," says Fedatova.

Linda Sechrist is a senior staff writer for Natural Awakenings. Connect at ItsAllAboutWe.com.