

Can you really eat
your way to
glowing skin and
silky hair?
What's worth
sampling from the
beauty buffet.

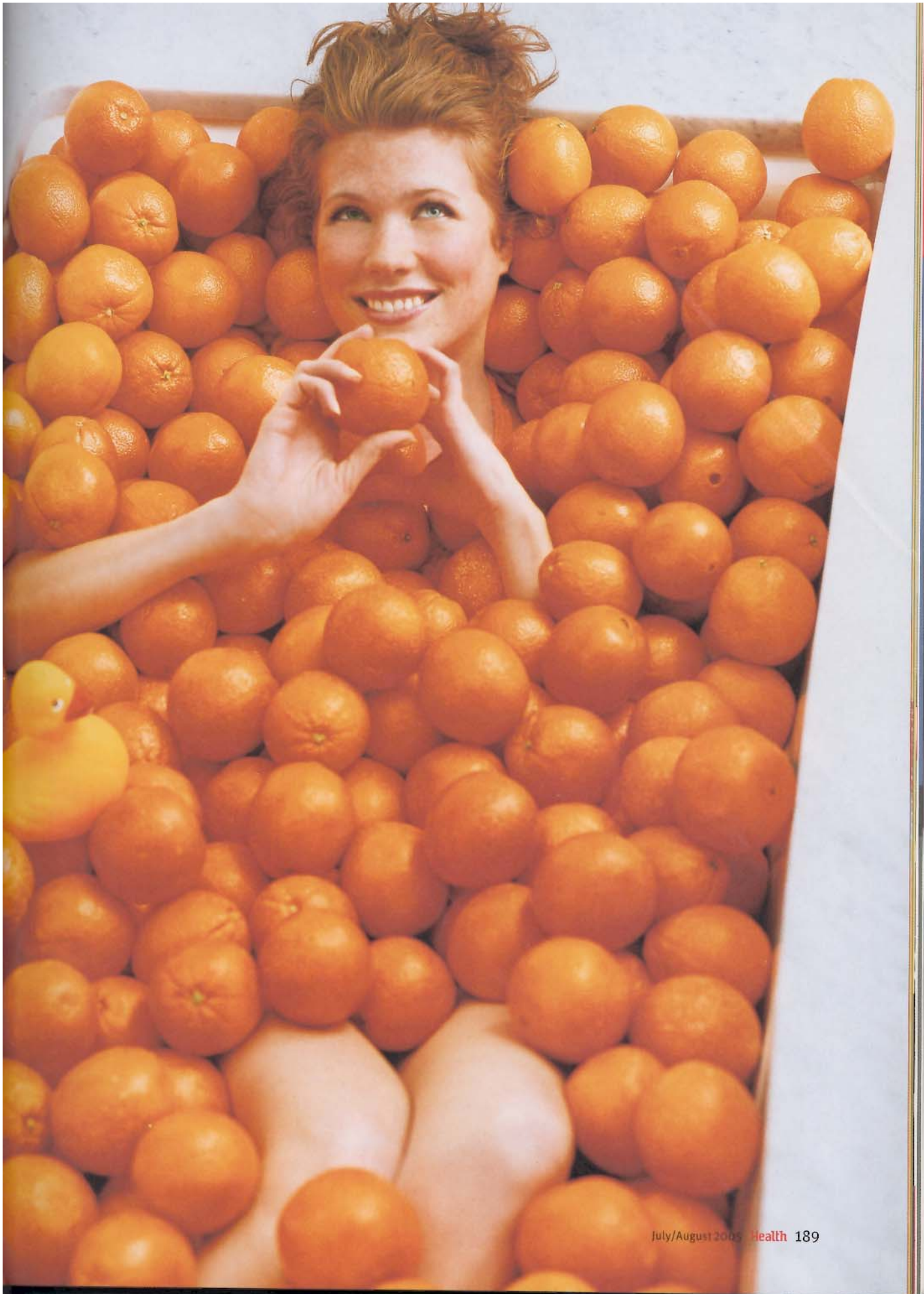
By Melanie Haiken

Photography by Amy Neunsinger

When Christine Horner, MD, a nationally known plastic surgeon, closed her popular Cincinnati practice 2½ years ago, it was for an unusual reason. “I finally realized that what my patients were asking me for wasn’t something I could give them surgically,” she says. “They wanted me to give them that radiant, youthful glow, and I’d have to tell them: I can’t give you that by tucking and tightening.” It *is* possible to revitalize skin and hair, explains Horner, who now writes about natural health. But the transformation comes from inside, from what you eat and drink (and take—a few supplements are helpful, too.) “Our skin and hair reflect our inner state of health,”

Beauty by the Bite

Photography: Amy Neunsinger; Hair: [unreadable]; Makeup: [unreadable]; [unreadable]



she adds. "Food really is our best medicine."

Few plastic surgeons have traded their scalpels for forks and spoons, but Horner's point of view is shared by an increasing number of dermatologists. You can't miss Nicholas Perricone, MD, or his latest blockbuster, *The Perricone Promise*, which claims that changing your diet can take years off your face. "I tell my patients they should eat salmon and cantaloupe twice a day for a week and then look in the mirror," he says. "I guarantee they'll see a difference. They always do."

Perricone's advice is a little daunting for anyone who doesn't live on a fishing scow, but other experts note that you can get visible results with changes that are easier to swallow. Mary Lupo, MD, a clinical professor of dermatology at Tulane University in New Orleans, tells her patients to eat blueberries every day. Alan Dattner, MD, who was on an American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) task force on nutrition for several years, recommends drinking lots of green tea. New York dermatologist Amy Newburger, MD, always asks her patients if they are on a low-fat diet, because they may need to boost their iron intake to keep their hair and skin from looking dull and dry. And the AAD now says certain antioxidants are critical in warding off or even reversing the aging that comes from sun damage (of course, you still need to wear sunscreen). The typical American diet, the Academy says, may not contain enough of these key skin-preserving elements.

What are these ingredients that can help fuel a transformation from the inside out? Here are the things the experts say are most promising.

Vitamin C **Powerful protector**

The inside story: If you never saw the sun, you might feel a little glum, but your skin would probably look years younger. That's because sunlight's ultraviolet rays stimulate the production of free radicals, unstable molecules that ricochet through the layers of your skin like tiny bullets. Vitamin C is one of the best defenses against free radicals, says dermatologist Karen Burke, MD. It binds to them and makes them harmless. The vitamin also increases the production of collagen, one of the most critical structural elements in skin. "There are so many studies now on the value of vitamin C—there's just no question that it prevents inflammation and sun damage," says Burke, who has conducted numerous studies of vitamins C and E, and the trace mineral selenium. "But it's not just preventive. Vitamin C reverses age damage as well."

How to get enough: Burke recommends getting at least 1,000 milligrams daily, unless it causes stomach upset (a glass of either orange or grapefruit juice contains about 100 mg). To get the vitamin's full benefit, studies suggest using a vitamin C-based skin cream, too. (See "The Creams That Make a Difference," page 192.)

Vitamin E **Natural sun blocker**

The inside story: Abundant in the outermost layer of skin, vitamin E is the first line of defense against UV light, according to Burke. "Many studies show that vitamin E reduces sun damage and helps skin texture, including preventing wrinkles," she adds. But the vitamin is depleted by sunlight, so it needs constant replenishing.

How to get enough: It's best to get vitamins through food—and vitamin E is easiest for your body to use if it comes packaged in almonds, for instance. But it's tough to get the 400 IU Burke and others suggest from food. Multis generally contain the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) of 30 IU; if you want more, look for a stand-alone E supplement containing d-alpha tocopherol.

Selenium **Plump it up (skin, that is)**

The inside story: The mineral selenium and vitamin E work together as skin plumpers, keeping skin smooth and elastic, Burke says.

Where to get it: Brazil nuts are a great source of selenium; tuna, salmon, and whole wheat pasta are also good sources. But unless you live in one of the Great Plains states, where water is high in the mineral, you may want to supplement, Dattner and Burke note. They suggest taking 100 micrograms (most multis contain 20 mcg or less).

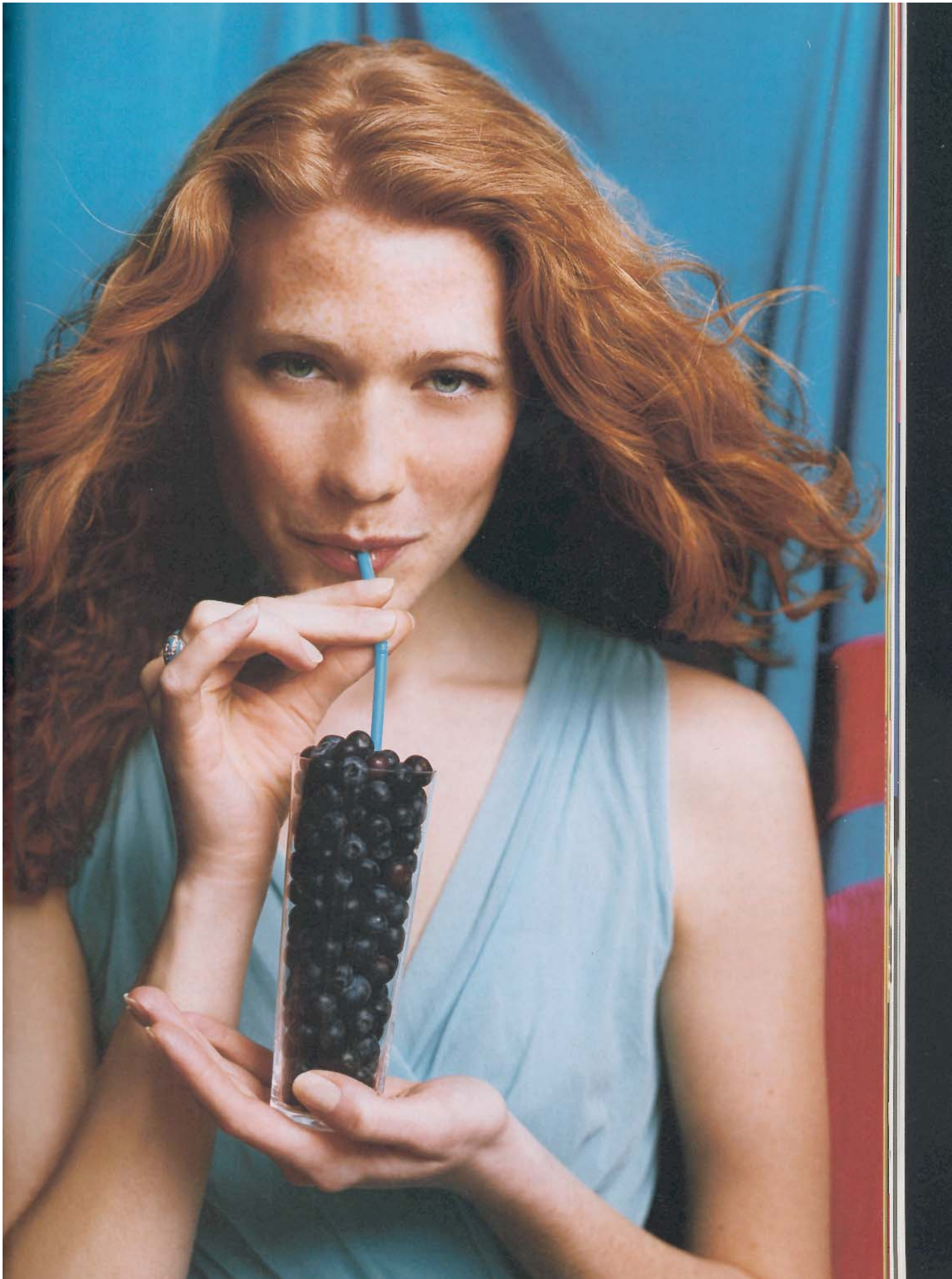
Vitamin A **Wrinkle smoother**

The inside story: Vitamin A is one of the best-known skin treatments (think of Retin-A, the first skin cream demonstrated to reduce wrinkles). The vitamin also helps even out skin tone, and works to prevent acne and dry, itchy skin. Some people find an A-based cream irritating, but everyone can benefit from getting enough vitamin A in their diet, Lupo says.

How to get enough: Eggs, meat, and dairy products are all good sources of A. If you're a vegan—no meat, eggs, or dairy—you may need a multivitamin to be sure you're getting enough. (But don't go overboard on supplements: More than 5,000 IU can be dangerous.)

Bioflavonoids **Colorful collagen booster**

The inside story: Many plants are high in compounds called bioflavonoids and carotenoids, which protect against damage from sunlight (best studied are lutein, which gives dark leafy greens their color, and lycopene, which makes tomatoes blush). "When you eat a diet filled with fruits and vegetables, you are giving that protective system to yourself," Dattner says. If one of his patients is lacking in these nutrients, he adds, supplements produce a fast improvement in skin tone. These compounds are potent antioxidants, and they also boost collagen synthesis.



How to get enough: Eat lots of tomatoes, greens, and brightly colored fruits, such as blueberries, raspberries, and cantaloupe. If you're looking for insurance, many multivitamins contain lutein and lycopene; separate bioflavonoid supplements are available as well.

Alpha lipoic acid (ALA) Antioxidant par excellence

The inside story: A superhero among antioxidants, ALA aids cellular regeneration in animal studies. It also seems to help regulate blood sugar, which may reduce inflammation throughout the body. That's a good thing: More and more researchers believe inflammation accelerates aging.

How to get enough: It's not easy to get ALA from food, unless you have a taste for liver (or kidney). And this antioxidant isn't found in most multivitamins; if you decide to supplement, take 100 mg twice a day.

Omega-3 fatty acids Inflammation fighter

The inside story: Omega-3 fatty acids have gotten a lot of attention in the past few years because of studies suggesting they help prevent heart disease and other ills, but they also fight inflammation. Yet most people fall short of the recommended amounts. "I've seen remarkable recoveries in people's skin and hair as soon as they start eating fish or taking fish oil capsules," Perricone says.

How to get enough: Perricone suggests eating salmon twice a day (he prefers wild salmon for its mix of fats). In the real world, though, you'll almost certainly need to take fish oil capsules to get the amount of omega-3s he and others recommend. Perricone calls for 2 to 4 fish oil capsules daily, each one containing 250 mg of DHA and 150 mg of EPA, which are particular omega-3s. But it's probably just as effective to take a combination omega-3 pill, Burke says; she suggests 500 mg three times a day.

Zinc Zaps dandruff—and more

The inside story: Most people get only about two-thirds of the recommended dietary allowance of zinc. This is unfortunate, because a deficiency has long been linked to skin problems like acne, dandruff, and slow wound healing.

How to get enough: Your body can't synthesize zinc; it has to get it from food. Oysters offer a lot of zinc, and poultry, beans, and fortified cereals get you some, too. You can get the RDA easily from your daily multivitamin.

Biotin Body builder

The inside story: If your brush has more hair in it than you'd like, make sure you're not short on the B vitamin biotin, says Dana G. Cohen, MD, a New York internist with a focus on nutrition. "I've been using it for years with good results," she says. The vitamin can also help people with

The creams that make a difference

You're getting an apple a day (not to mention your serving of spinach or salmon). Should you also be taking one of the new "beauty vitamins" made by cosmetic companies, or using a vitamin-enriched skin cream?

There's no need to seek out vitamins specifically aimed at beauty, our experts say, though many of the lines do include recommended nutrients. But they are fans of antioxidant skin creams: In studies, explains Karen Burke, MD, a New York dermatologist and American Academy of Dermatology spokesperson, a combination of supplements and skin creams is most effective.

Vitamin A creams like Retin-A and Renova are the best known. And for an over-the-counter product, New Haven, Connecticut, dermatologist Lisa Donofrio likes Neutrogena's Healthy

Skin Anti-Wrinkle Cream (\$11.99). Also worth trying: L'Oréal Dermo-Expertise Revitalift Face & Neck Anti-Wrinkle and Firming Cream (\$12.99), Estée Lauder Diminish Anti-Wrinkle Retinol Treatment (\$80), and Lancôme Primordiale Optimum Night (\$63).

Vitamin C creams have also been shown to reduce damage from sun exposure, Burke says. Just be sure to get one with pure ascorbic acid, which holds its potency longer, and use it promptly after opening. Look for a pH between 3.5 and 4.2, and a concentration of at least 10 percent vitamin C. Burke recommends SkinCeuticals' Serum 20 (\$95). Our other favorites: Avon's Anew Clearly C Serum (\$20), Murad Essential-C Daily Renewal Complex (\$80), and Shiseido White Lucent Brightening Protective Moisturizer SPF 16 (\$48).

brittle, peeling nails (a condition called onychoschizia).

How to get enough: Nuts are the best source of biotin—a half-cup of peanuts or almonds, or a couple of tablespoons of peanut butter will get you the RDA of 30 mcg. Many experts, however, recommend that you get 300 to 500 mcg daily, an amount that's difficult to get in food or even in a multivitamin. If you have reason to think you're deficient, consider taking a stand-alone biotin supplement.

Iron Makes you glow

The inside story: "Low iron stores will be reflected in dull, lifeless hair and skin long before showing up as anemia," dermatologist Newburger says. "Almost half of the women I see who are losing hair from non-age-related causes are iron-deficient."

How to get enough: You need at least 18 mg a day. Vegetarians and dieters are most at risk, but anyone who does not eat much red meat or spinach can become iron-deficient. Here's one easy way to up your intake: Switch to an iron-fortified cereal. 🍷

Melanie Haiken writes frequently on beauty and nutrition.