

Nutrition in the Day Spa

Serenity, relaxation, wellness... these words are synonymous with beauty, health and longevity. People come to the spa to beautify, unwind and rejuvenate their over-worked systems even if it is on a temporary basis. In our modern society, we live a frenzied lifestyle with so many schedules to meet and despite the sociologists earlier prediction of a more leisurely lifestyle in the millennium, most of us are constantly pushed to our limits with high levels of stress in our daily lives. In fact, many of us don't know how to simply relax and do absolutely nothing! Regular high levels of stress activate the release of excessive cortisol hormones into the bloodstream and this is detrimental to our health and can lead to cardiovascular diseases such as high blood pressure.

The primary services offered in the day spa are helping to develop clear healthy skin, nails and hair and promote relaxation. It should come as no surprise that proper nutrition enhanced with dietary supplementation has finally been established as the underlying principle for a healthy mind and body. The health mandate for the millennium stipulates that nutrition should be taught within the training curriculum of all health care professions and this certainly includes aesthetics.

In aesthetic school, we are taught that if we clean, peel and moisturize, moisturize moisturize... the skin will become healthy and beautiful! Admittedly, this external care is very important as an extrinsic factor for clean, smooth skin, but nutrition is now recognized as the main intrinsic factor for developing healthy skin, nails and hair. It is not sufficient to diagnose the needs of the client's skin, but also try to assess their basic nutritional needs so that you can provide a more holistic approach to developing healthier skin and body.

By understanding and practicing proper dietary habits, aestheticians can not only enjoy the health benefits themselves but also help to improve their level of service to their clients.

by
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internal
health

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Nutrition Buzzwords

The new buzzwords in the nutritional media include nutraceuticals, phytochemicals, antioxidants and functional foods.

A nutraceutical is a substance isolated from a food that may have a protective function against diseases. Examples are salicylates in tomatoes, which are a natural form of aspirin and allicin, an oil soluble compound in garlic that has powerful antibiotic effects.

Phytochemicals are naturally occurring plant chemicals found in edible fruits and vegetables. They give plants their color and flavor. They are not nutrients, but have protective health benefits. Examples are lycopene that gives tomatoes and watermelon their red color and geinstein in soy that is associated with a reduced risk of breast cancer.

Antioxidants are substances that protect the body from heart disease and some cancers by neutralizing free radicals. They are vitamins C, E, beta-carotene (A), selenium, certain amino acids and hormones.

A functional food is any ingredient that is eaten as part of a usual diet and may provide health benefits beyond basic nutrition, e.g. monounsaturated fats.

You don't have to become a nutritionist or dietician to recommend basic nutritional advice because many clients are very educated from reading magazines and books which are actually non-credible sources of information. A helpful strategy to determine the basic

nutritional needs of your client is to have a simple questionnaire filled out with yes/no answers. An example of such a form is as follows:

The answers to these questions will help you to determine strategies in recommending changes in lifestyle behaviors, particularly dietary changes. For example, insufficient consumption of fruits and vegetables will indicate deficiencies in fiber, vitamins and minerals while insufficient water intake will lead to dryness and dehydration. Vitamin and mineral sup-

LIFESTYLE QUESTIONNAIRE (Tick off your answer)

Do you consume:

1. < 3-5 servings of vegetables per day?
Yes___ No___

2. < 2-4 servings of fruits per day?
Yes___ No___

3. Are you: A) Vegetarian B) Semi-Vegetarian
C) Mostly Carnivore

4. Do you eat a lot of red/yellow vegetables?
Yes___ No___

5. Is your daily diet more than 30% saturated fats?
Yes___ No___

6. Do you eat fish 2-3 times a week?
Yes___ No___

7. Do you eat breakfast?
Yes___ No___

8. Do you drink less than 8 glasses of water daily?
Yes___ No___

9. Do you smoke?
Yes___ No___

10. Do you drink more than 1 glass of wine daily?
Yes___ No___

11. Do you exercise regularly?
Yes___ No___

12. Do you suffer from high stress?
Yes___ No___

plements should be taken along with natural foods because it is very difficult to find truly fresh food in our contaminated world. For example, frozen vegetables have 25 percent less vitamins (A, C, B1 and B3) than fresh vegetables, while canned vegetables have 2-3 times fewer vitamins than frozen ones. Yet sometimes fresh produce may have been left on a truck or grocery shelf for many days before arriving at the supermarket and therefore possess even fewer nutrients than frozen foods. Exposure to oxygen, carbon dioxide, cold, moisture, light and poor food preparation all have detrimental effects on fresh foods. Antioxidant supplements would augment the nutrient deficiencies and help reduce free radical formation under high stress conditions and other environmental toxins.

Determining Basic Nutritional Needs

"You are what you eat!" This idiom is so true because one of the most basic functions of the human body is digestion. The essential nutrients that you need to construct new tissues are made from the building blocks of the body such as amino acids. The skin, nails and hair are all appendages of the epidermis and are fed nourishment from nutrients that are the breakdown of dietary food intake. Nutritional deficiencies lead to unhealthy skin conditions and poor health during the skin analysis. The symptoms below may be indicators of basic nutritional needs (see chart).

One of the ultimate benefits in visiting the spa is to achieve a sense of well being, if only for a short time. No amount of pampering treatments can

bring about long-term wellness benefits unless lifestyle interventions are taken into consideration. For example, digestive disorders play a major role in skin disorders because of malabsorption of essential nutrients. High stress levels, excessive sun exposure, smoking and alcohol generate free radicals, which lead to premature skin aging and degenerative diseases.

Fiber

It is ironic that despite the abundant supply of food in our society, people are not eating properly and poor nutrition is strongly correlated with the leading causes of death. Digestive disorders are one of the most common problems that people suffer from and they include bloating, constipation, gas and diarrhea. They reveal themselves on the skin's surface in the form of skin

SYMPTOMS

Pale eyes and skin, dull hair

Dry, flaky skin

Swollen, dry cracked lips

Sensitive skin

Oily skin, clogged hair follicles

Rough, scaly skin on exposed areas

Acne, eczema

Red, flushed skin

Easily bruised skin, broken capillaries
Congested, mottled complexion

Dull, shedding hair

Stress, fatigue

Brittle, spoon shaped nails

Varicosity

DIETARY RECOMMENDATIONS

Iron, phosphorus, copper, B6, B12, folic acid, vitamin B complex

First class proteins, omega 3 fatty acids more liquids, biotin, B2, copper, potassium, folic acid, bioflavonoids

Riboflavin, more fluids, vitamin C, biotin, Bioflavonoids, omega 3 fatty acids

Biotin, vitamin C, Bioflavonoids

Beta carotene, riboflavin, zinc, fewer dairy products, more fluids

Vitamin B3, Biotin, vitamin D

Vitamin B5, potassium, fewer dairy products, more fiber, more fluids, zinc, low fat foods

Vitamin C, bioflavonoids, vitamin B complex
Avoid stimulating food/drink, e.g. alcohol, spicy foods, smoking, caffeine

Beta carotene, vitamin C, E, bioflavonoids, biotin, folic acid
more fiber, more fluids, potassium, sulfur
vitamin B3, B5, folic acid, copper, enzyme therapy, zinc

first class protein, copper, zinc sulfur

Antioxidants (beta carotene, vitamin E, selenium) vitamin B1, iron, chromium, zinc

Biotin, vitamin B2, iron, sulfur, copper

Vitamin C, E, bioflavonoids, low-fat foods

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congestion and a mottled complexion. The average dietary fiber intake for most Americans is 11-15 mg and the American Cancer Society recommends 25-40 mg for good health. This daily amount of fiber can be obtained from eating a high fiber diet augmented with natural enzymes such as papain from papaya, bromelain from pineapple or enzyme supplements, which help to break the food down into a digestible form for absorption. In addition, drink lots of water and reduce food toxins from excessive amounts of refined foods. Higher dietary fiber can produce clear healthy skin and reduce digestive disorders as well as having many other health benefits. There are two types of fiber, soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber is mostly found in fruits, oats, barley and legumes while insoluble fiber is found in whole grains, cereals and vegetables. Water-soluble fiber binds with cholesterol and pushes it through the gut while insoluble fiber promotes weight loss by adding bulk, helps relieve constipation and reduces the risk of colon cancer and cardiovascular disease, the two leading causes of death in America.

Antioxidants

Free radicals are generated in all oxidative processes within living tissues. In youth, our bodies produce natural antioxidants to neutralize the free radical damage, but as we get older, this ability is diminished and the accumulated effects of free radical damage reduce our immunity and make us more vulnerable to diseases so we age more rapidly. Think of oxidative processes that occur in car rusting, or a cut apple that turns brown. When you pour some orange or lemon juice (vitamin C – antioxidant) over the apple, it does not turn brown and maintains its freshness. Antioxidants fight free radicals

that occur from air pollution, smoke, alcohol and other environmental sources. The North American diet contains more than 50 percent saturated fats that are high in substances called PG2 (prostaglandins 2) which promote inflammation such as acne breakouts, arthritis and cholestasis. Advise your clients to reduce their intake of saturated fats and choose monounsaturated fats such as canola and extra virgin olive oils instead. It is important to note that evening primrose oils, borage and black currant oils contain GLA (gamma linoleic acids) and together with sufficient amounts of vitamin A, B, C and zinc, PG2 can be converted to PG1, the healthier prostaglandins. A low saturated fat diet also contributes to weight loss, which is part of wellness. Antioxidants found in natural foods include vitamins C, E and beta-carotene. Other sources are found in garlic, the mineral selenium and certain amino acids. Free radical scavengers are substances that work to mobilize free radical destruction. These include phytochemicals such as soybean extracts that possess so many health benefits and are attributed to longevity.

Dietary Supplementation

Since our modern society is inundated with processed foods devoid of nutrients which contain environmental toxins, it is more difficult to obtain the essential nutrients that are usually present in natural foods unless dietary supplements are ingested. However, it should be noted that supplements are adjuncts to daily food intake and are not to be used as alternatives to natural foods. Major health institutions such as the National Institute of Health are now advocating the importance of dietary supplements in your diet and if you are physically active, it is even more important to take antioxidant supplements due to the high levels of free radicals generated during exercise.

Phytochemicals act to reduce inflammation in tissues and certain herbal extracts such as bioflavonoids from green tea, onions and grape seed extracts increase our immunity against

infection and diseases. Dietary supplements are especially important for those who suffer from food allergies, are pregnant or planning pregnancy, vegans, people on very low calorie diets and people with poor appetites due to disease or medication. Nutrition interacts positively with the health of the skin and body in such a substantial way that it is important to keep up with new developments in nutrition.

People are no longer totally dependent on their physicians for health care management and they are seeking alternative health care practitioners that can also include educated aestheticians. There are over 12,000 publications that support dietary supplementation for maintaining good health and longevity. The average age of clients who frequent spas are 40 years plus and most of them become more

concerned about their appearance and mortality in their 50s. When their friends and relatives are dying and health issues become more important, nutrition is at the top of the list for health care management. There is an information explosion for health because of the baby boomers' market and health is one of the most popular topics researched on the internet. Since most people obtain their information about nutrition from articles, books and the internet, it is simple for the health spa to provide these resources to their clients because they are already coming there for the health of their skin, nails, hair and body.

In conclusion, nutrition is a 40 billion-dollar market and the opportunity exists for the spa to help direct some of their clients' spending towards dietary supplements since they are already doing so without any profes-

sional guidance. In an aging population, you can help move people forward in their search for health by using wellness strategies that will eventually pay off for your business. By educating your clients and keeping them in top shape both externally and internally, you will not lose them through diseases of aging and their short term wellness goals will transfer to long term goals instead. ■

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