

RUCHI GURNANI · NUTRITIONIST

Skin that glows, built from the plate

 Pimples, dark spots, dull skin, dry skin, dark circles, lines after 30. What causes each one, what to eat, what to put on, and what to stop buying.

Swipe 👉

Read this first

Skin is built from the inside. A new layer takes about **four weeks** to reach the surface. So nothing on this list shows in a week, and everything shows in a month if you keep it up.

Three things do more for skin than any cream: **sunscreen, seven hours of sleep, and protein at every meal.** They cost almost nothing. Start there.

Sugar, maida and short sleep show on the face before they show on the scale. Fix the plate and the pillow before the serum.

THE ONE RULE

Sunscreen every morning, indoors and in winter, two finger-lengths for the face. It beats every anti-ageing food and cream on the next pages.

1

THE THREE THAT MATTER MOST

SUNSCREEN People who used it every day aged visibly less than people who used it when they felt like it. The sun causes most lines, most spots and most unevenness. SPF 30 or above, every morning.

SLEEP Seven hours. Short sleep makes you eat about 400 calories more the next day, most of it sugar, and the skin shows it first. Phone out of the bedroom.

PROTEIN Skin is made of protein. Dal, paneer, curd, eggs, chicken, fish at every meal. A glowing face on a poha-and-chai breakfast is rare.

WATER Two and a half litres. Dry skin is the first sign of a dry body.

2

PIMPLES AND ACNE

SUGAR Sugar, cold drinks, sweets and maida push insulin, and insulin turns the oil taps on. Cut the sweet drinks for four weeks and watch the forehead.

MILK Milk, especially a lot of it, makes some people break out. Keep curd and paneer, cut the three glasses of milk, and see.

FRIED Oily, fried food is on the list of things that make acne worse. Samosa and chips are not neutral.

IN Fruit and sabzi of every colour, dal daily, nuts, seeds, and a katori of curd. Zinc from til and pumpkin seeds helps the healing.

THE CREAM

Pimples that leave marks or hurt need a dermatologist, not a face wash. A prescription cream fixes in weeks what packs take a year to not fix.

3

DARK SPOTS AND UNEVEN TONE

THE SUN Every spot got darker in the sun. Sunscreen is the treatment and the prevention. No pack lightens a spot you keep tanning.

ORANGE AND GREEN Carrots, pumpkin, papaya, mango, palak, methi, every day for a month. The skin tone warms and evens out. It is the colour in the food reaching the skin.

VITAMIN C Amla, guava, nimbu, capsicum, orange. Eat them; they build the collagen that keeps skin firm and even.

B12 Low B12 darkens the skin on the knuckles, elbows and around the mouth. Vegetarians on acidity tablets, get it tested.

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DRY SKIN AND CRACKED LIPS

- FAT** Very low-fat eating gives dry skin and cracked lips. One sabzi a day in mustard oil or ghee. A fistful of walnuts or almonds. Seeds on the curd.
- WATER** Two and a half litres. Coffee and chai count against it, not for it.
- THE BATH** Hot showers strip the skin. Warm, short, and a moisturiser on damp skin within three minutes.
- LIPS** Cracked corners of the mouth that keep coming back are low iron or low B vitamins, not the weather. Rajma, chana, curd, eggs. Lick less.

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DARK CIRCLES

NOT ONLY SLEEP

Half the dark circles I see are low iron. Pale inside the lower eyelid, tired by 4 pm, cold hands: get ferritin tested.

THE IRON PLATE

Rajma, chana, sprouts, palak with tomato, til, khajoor. Nimbu or amla on the same plate. Chai an hour away from meals.

ALLERGY

Dark circles with a blocked nose and sneezing are an allergy. The rubbing darkens the skin. Treat the nose.

SLEEP

Seven hours, flat pillow, no salt-heavy dinner. Sleeping on your face pools the blood under the eyes.

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PUFFY FACE IN THE MORNING

- SALT** Last night's papad, pickle, namkeen, restaurant food. Salt holds water and the face shows it first. Potassium pushes it out: banana, coconut water, a katori of dahi.
- ALCOHOL** Two drinks puff the face for a day. Water between drinks, and nothing after midnight.
- SLEEP FLAT** Sleeping flat pools water in the face. One pillow higher.
- THE FIX** A glass of water on waking, a ten-minute walk, and the puff is gone in an hour. Puffy every morning for weeks: thyroid and kidney tests.

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LINES AND FIRMNESS AFTER 30

- THE SUN** Most lines are sun, not age. Sunscreen is the anti-ageing cream.
- SUGAR** High blood sugar stiffens the collagen in skin. Cut the sweet drinks and the mithai habit. Blood sugar shows on the face.
- SMOKING** Smoking ages skin faster than anything on this page. Lines around the mouth, grey tone, slow healing.
- PROTEIN AND VITAMIN C** Collagen is built from protein with vitamin C. Dal, paneer, eggs, plus amla, guava, nimbu, capsicum every day. That is where the collagen comes from, not a powder.

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ON THE OUTSIDE: WHAT WORKS

A RETINOID The one cream that is proven for lines, spots and dullness. Prescription strength from a dermatologist. Start twice a week at night, always sunscreen next morning. Not when pregnant.

MOISTURISER Any plain one, on damp skin, twice a day. More expensive is not more effective.

HOMEMADE PACKS Besan and curd, or multani mitti and rose water, once a week, ten minutes. They clean and cool. They do not lighten, tighten or remove anything permanent.

DO NOT Nimbu directly on the face, toothpaste on pimples, scrubbing daily, steaming daily. All of them damage the skin barrier and make the problem worse.

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WHAT TO STOP BUYING

COLLAGEN POWDER

Once the studies paid for by the makers are removed, the effect disappears. Spend the money on sunscreen and paneer.

DETOX WATER

Cucumber in water is water. The liver and kidneys detox you. Nothing in a bottle does.

GLUTATHIONE

Skin-whitening tablets and drips. No proof they work, real risks. Your skin colour is not a problem to fix.

SERUM OF THE MONTH

One cleanser, one moisturiser, one sunscreen, one retinoid if prescribed. Four things. Everything else is a wish.

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ONE DAY OF EATING FOR SKIN

- WAKE UP** A glass of water. Five soaked almonds or two walnuts.
- BREAKFAST** Two eggs or paneer bhurji with a roti, or a moong chilla with curd. A guava or an orange.
- LUNCH** Dal or rajma, rice or roti, a katori of sabzi, salad with nimbu, a katori of curd.
- 4 PM** A bowl of papaya, or carrot sticks, or a fistful of roasted chana. Not biscuits.
- DINNER** Palak paneer or methi sabzi, dal, two rotis. Pumpkin seeds on top. Dinner three hours before bed.

FOUR WEEKS

The new skin reaches the surface in a month. Judge it then, not on day three.

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WHEN IT IS A DERMATOLOGIST

- GO** Pimples that hurt, leave pits or marks, or cover the jaw and back. A spot that changes shape or colour. A rash that spreads. Patches of white or dark skin that grow.
- ALSO GO** Acne with irregular periods and hair on the chin. That is PCOS, and the plate helps only alongside treatment.
- THE REPORT** Ferritin, B12, vitamin D and TSH. Take the numbers with you; skin often answers to one of them.
- FOR LIFE** Sunscreen every morning. Seven hours. Protein at every meal. Fruit and sabzi of every colour. One pack a week, no scrubbing. That is the whole plan.

RUCHI GURNANI · NUTRITIONIST

Skin is one part. Your plan is the rest.



I read your reports before I write a single meal. Then the plan: your routine, what you actually eat, your family's food. Three plans of ten days each, so it changes as you change.

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