

Healthy diet maintains body weight

If we are what we eat, then it may be a good idea to take inventory of the foods the average person consumes on a daily basis. Although some foods are sought after for their taste, there are many foods that can be enjoyed because they have a positive effect on a person's appearance.

In the simplest sense, eating a healthy diet can help maintain a good body weight, which is one way to improve individual appearance. But more specifically, there are certain foods that have particular benefits for the skin, hair and body. The key is knowing what to eat.

Soy: Soy is rich in amino acids. This food, whether eaten as a soy bean or in the many foods made from soy, including tofu, can help the skin retain moisture and improve elasticity. Soy is also protein-rich, which can help a person feel full longer and avoid overeating.

Blueberries and cherries: These fruits are chock full of antioxidants, which studies show can reduce inflammation, a culprit of puffy, aging skin. Cherries are also a natural source of melatonin, which can help a person get a restful night's sleep -- another component of looking your best.

Fresh herbs: Seasoning food with flavorful herbs instead of salt is another way to improve looks. Salt is often a culprit in water retention,

which can lead to bloating and puffiness. This is also advantageous to people who need to reduce salt intake thanks to high blood pressure or other ailments.

Lime, pear, apple, and strawberry: These power fruits are high in vitamin C and other nutrients, making them an important component of a healthy diet. Furthermore, some research has suggested that certain foods, including limes, pears and apples, can whiten teeth.

Egg products: Eggs are high in vitamin A, which helps repair skin. Not getting enough vitamin A may contribute to wrinkles.

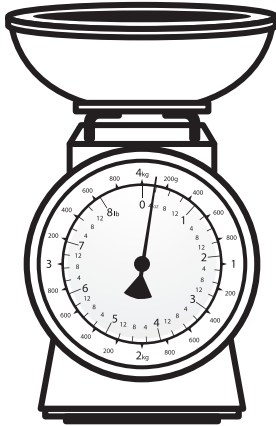
Milk products: Consuming low- or nonfat dairy products helps promote strong bones and teeth. Nothing says beautiful more than a big, bright smile. B vitamins in dairy also help with red blood cell

growth, cells that are responsible for bringing oxygen to other cells. This can promote healthy, young-looking skin.

Yogurt: Yogurt contains beneficial bacteria, which help with digestion. This can help cleanse out the system and prevent toxins from backing up in the body.

Water: Of course a person needs to stay hydrated, and water can flush the body of excess salt and toxins while also plumping the skin.

There are many nutritionally sound foods that can boost outward appearance as well.



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From left, front row: Penny Otter, Kathleen Schemper, Gina Frack; second row: Leslie Pfannenstiel, Sandy Husted, Angie Bird; back row: Penni Britt and Jenda Jones. Not pictured: Kathryn Rachow, Susan Engelbert and Theola Otter.

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Simple steps to gain control of your finances

Though the economy is on the mend, many families forced to make sacrifices during the downturn will continue to look for ways to maintain more control of their finances in the event another period of economic struggle surfaces down the road. It's safe to assume no family wants to find itself in the position millions of families did during the downturn, dealing with unemployment, a nonexistent job market and the specter of foreclosure on the family home.

While there's no telling what the economic future holds, there are steps families can take to gain greater control of their finances and put themselves in a better position to handle whatever the economy throws at them down the road.

*** Start saving receipts.** Nowadays, more and more people use debit cards for daily purchases, including smaller purchases like cups of coffee. While this is more convenient, it also makes it easier to lose track of spending. Families should start saving receipts for all purchases, not just big-ticket items. At the end of the month, examine the receipts to see how much frivolous spending is going on. A close examination of receipts can help reign in spending on items that aren't generally large, but can add up over time.

*** Make a grocery shopping list.** Another tradition of yesteryear that has seemingly fallen by the wayside, the grocery list can help families save substantial amounts of money over time. Men and women who grocery shop without a list are more likely to spend more money than they had intended, buying extra food they don't need and making impulse buys as well. If you have a list of what you need when you go to the store, you'll not only save money but you're likely to spend far less time at the store as a result.

*** Re-examine your commute.** Men and women might prefer driving themselves to work. Driving to work alone is more convenient, but it's almost never more cost-effective. Consider public transportation where it's available. Public transportation can remove the stress from traffic jams, as men and women can bury their noses in books or watch a movie on their iPads rather than stare at the vehicle in front of them. If no public transportation is available, propose a carpool to co-workers. Both of these alternatives can save individuals money on gas (the cost of which is once again on the rise) while adding years to their vehicle's life expectancy, helping them get more out of their vehicle dollars.

Thanking all of our Wonderful WORKING WOMEN!

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