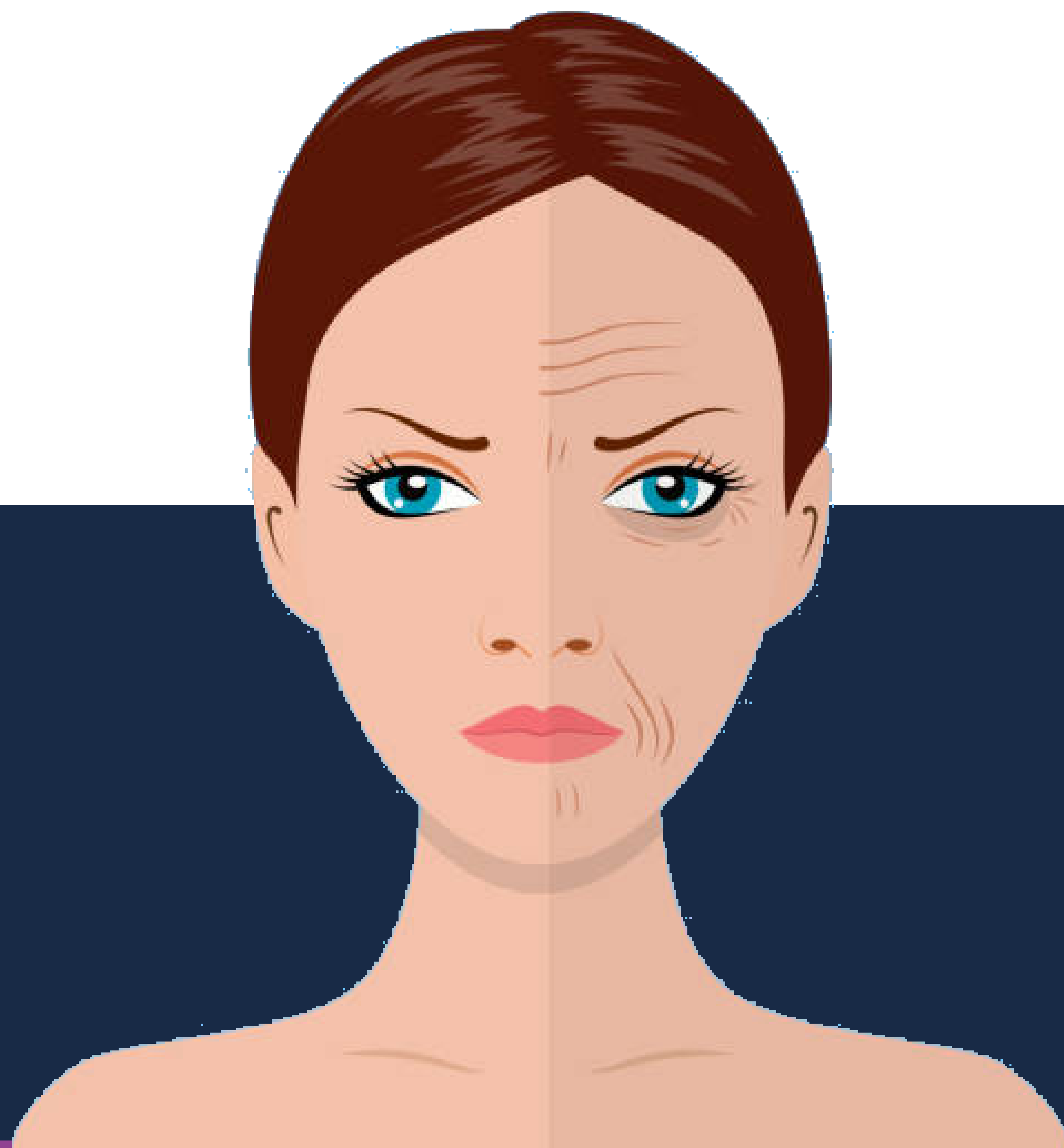


HOW CAN I STOP MY FACE FROM AGING?



Nobody wants to grow old. Unfortunately, we cannot do much about it. We can, however, delay the process of aging by making a few choices to protect our skin from the inside and the outside.

Healthy Diet

One of the best and easiest ways to look younger is by choosing a healthier lifestyle filled with nutritious foods. Eating healthy foods rich in antioxidants nourishes skin cells which results in less wrinkles. Foods packed with antioxidants include berries, leafy greens, olive oil, tomatoes, carrots and many other fresh fruits and vegetables (1). The other side of the coin is that eating red meat is shown to increase wrinkles (1).

To keep the skin supple, elastic and plump eating diet high in polyunsaturated, omega 3 fats is recommended (2). Foods that contain these beneficial fats are oily fish such as salmon, mackerel and sardines; nuts, especially walnuts, and flaxseed oil (3).

Foods rich in vitamin C are also great for the skin. This is because vitamin C boosts the production of collagen which makes the skin look smooth and plumped up (4). Foods high in vitamin C that you should eat as often as possible are citrus fruits, kiwi fruit, strawberries, watercress, red peppers, broccoli and tomatoes (5).

Many skincare serums contain vitamin C. So choose one of these and apply it to your skin day and night for ultimate protection. As well as applying an anti-aging serum it remember to keep up a good anti-aging skin care routine. Start by washing your skin; but do it gently. Scrubbing your skin will irritate it which can speed up the aging process.

You need to cleanse your skin to get rid of toxins from pollution and make up. Once washed, use a good quality, natural moisturiser. Dry skin looks older and wrinkles up quicker. Moisturiser will keep it looking young.

Sugar

If you're eating biscuits, cakes and sweets/candies or drinking sugary fizzy drinks then you need to seriously have a re-think about your choices. These contain high levels of sugar which is bad news for the skin. When the body processes glucose and fructose it creates a substance called AGE or Advanced Glycation End-products (6).

This speeds up the ageing process because collagen and elastin that keep the skin looking plumped up and youthful, are damaged at an increased rate by sugars in the blood stream (7). This can have detrimental effects on skin cells as well as internal organs, so cut out these sugary foods and drinks completely if you want youthful looking skin.

Caffeine

When drinking caffeinated drinks such as black tea and coffee you need to consider the effect of the caffeine. Caffeine can cause problems if you are drinking too much. It's a stimulant which disrupts sleep patterns and the body uses this trigger to reduce melatonin production, meaning that you don't get enough quality, deep sleep to restore the skin cells (8).

Skin is repaired during sleep. Without enough restorative sleep you will look tired with dark circles and bags under your eyes. Not the most youthful of looks!

Caffeine also affects your blood vessels by restricting them so the flow of nutrients around your body is reduced (9).

Pollution

Pollution in the air can affect the appearance of skin by contributing to wrinkles, pigmentation and lack of elasticity (10).

Avoid exposure to pollution by keeping windows shut in the car and home. Use an air purifier to suck out particles from your rooms and avoid sitting near smoking areas.

Smoking

Having mentioned smoking – that is another cause of premature skin aging. Oftentimes smoking tobacco or being exposed to second hand smoke will irritate the skin, leading to dark circles under the eyes, wrinkles around the nose and mouth, and loose skin which can all make a person look older than they actually are. The more you smoke, the worse the effect so at the very least it is advisable to cut back on smoking cigarettes. This will benefit your overall health as well as the outward signs of aging (11).

Alcohol

Many people know that drinking alcohol in excess is bad for your health, but many aren't aware just how much it can affect your appearance at the same time. If you're looking to keep up the youthful glow of your skin, then you need to restrict the amount of alcohol you consume. While part of ageing is down to genetics and lifestyle choices, there are certain things that can speed up the process by affecting your skin. By giving up alcohol completely - or cutting right back on it - you will give yourself a fighting chance of keeping the years at bay.

Alcohol causes dehydration (12) which causes fine lines and wrinkles, hollows out the cheeks and creates dark circles under the eyes. This makes you look old and haggard. Skin also requires lipids. These are found in natural oils produced by glands in the epidermis. Drinking alcohol destroys these oils leading to dry, scaly-looking skin which lacks lustre. Alcohol slows down collagen production so the ongoing process of skin renewal slows down (13). Alcohol also increases the likelihood of sunburn so keep off the booze during the day on holiday (14).

Sunlight

The sun emits ultraviolet rays which cause damage to the skin on your face. Sunbathing too much causes the loss of collagen which leads to sagging skin. Not only will sunbathing make skin look older, it can also lead to cancerous growths on the skin. Protecting your face from harmful UV rays is an easy way to avoid premature aging. First of all stay out of the sun. If that isn't possible protect your skin by applying a high SPF (sun protection factor) sun cream every hour and after swimming. In addition to this some foods have been shown to increase the body's ability to protect itself from UV rays (15). These foods include carrots, tomatoes, leafy greens and eggs.

Look as young as you naturally are by making healthy lifestyle choices that benefit all areas of your body not just your facial features. But, if all this seems like way too much work then simply sleep on your back. Due to the force of gravity it is much less aging and stressful on your skin than other sleeping positions (16).

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