

SURVIVING THOSE **MIDLIFE** COMPLEXION CONUNDRUMS

Skin-friendly supplements when adult acne and wrinkles strike

by Michele Cagan

Complexion emergencies were bad enough when you were in high school, but adult acne *AND* wrinkles?! Just one of those issues can be distressing, but both at once can really start to affect your confidence.

Those early signs of aging—fine lines and wrinkles around your eyes and mouth—can feel like neon-sign reminders that you're getting older. And, of course, breakouts always seem to pop up at the worst possible times—a first date, a job interview, a big presentation.

When you go looking for help, the store shelves are lined with dozens of lotions, potions, scrubs, and creams, and it's tough to know which ones to choose. Harsh acne treatments dry out your skin, making it even more prone to developing wrinkles. Anti-aging creams seem to trigger breakouts. And the “solutions” that offer help on both ends don't seem to do much at all.

Perfecting your complexion while battling pimples and wrinkles can be challenging. But the two do have some common triggers,



including toxin buildup, inflammation, and oxidative stress. Luckily, there are simple ways to address the underlying causes and minimize the signs of both aging and breakouts at the same time—without making either one worse.

The trick is to promote healthy skin from the inside out with targeted nutrients and face-saving herbs. Giving your body the supplies it needs to boost wrinkle-smoothing collagen production, neutralize damaging free radicals, tame inflammation, and detoxify toxins solves both problems at once...with an overall health boost to boot.

Try adding the following nutrients and herbs into your daily routine for beautifully smooth and clear skin.

SILICA

Silica is a mineral you don't hear much about, but it's essential for beautiful skin. Your body needs just the right amount of silica to produce elastin and collagen, two proteins that support healthy, smooth skin. And since the production of collagen and elastin decreases as you get older, replenishing silica levels can slow down skin aging.

BOSWELLIA

Inflammation can drive wrinkles and make acne even worse. Those glaring red-purple pimples are sure signs of inflammation. So getting it under control will calm your skin and clear it faster. That's where boswellia comes in. It's a safe and powerful natural inflammation fighter. But you want to make sure to get a high-quality *standardized* product here, one that contains at least 10 percent AKBA (a potent anti-inflammatory compound).

BURDOCK ROOT

Burdock is a little-known herb with a great résumé. Not only does it deliver antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant properties, it's also well-known for supporting your body's



natural detoxification systems. That makes it a perfect foil for both acne and wrinkles. Burdock's secret powers come from a naturally occurring compound called *arctiin*. Studies show that arctiin helps improve collagen production and protect skin against sun damage—a major cause of premature aging.

ZINC

Zinc does double-duty fighting skin aging and acne at the same time. This essential mineral plays a key part in cellular health. Get too little of it and you'll be more prone to dry, wrinkly skin and breakouts. One study even found that your zinc levels match up to acne severity: People with the lowest zinc levels had the worst acne.



OMEGA-7 FATTY ACIDS

Omega-7 fatty acids are the much rarer cousin of common omega-3s. Omega-7s fortify the walls of your cells and help your cells hold on to moisture. The best source—by far—for these super-hydrating nutrients is a bright orange berry called sea buckthorn. A revealing clinical study found that women taking sea buckthorn saw their skin moisture improve by 49 percent, wrinkle depth improve by 9.2 percent, and skin elasticity increase by 26 percent in just three months. Their skin looked fresher and tighter with fewer noticeable wrinkles!

SUPEROXIDE DISMUTASE

Your body naturally creates a super-powered antioxidant called superoxide dismutase (SOD). The two outer layers of your skin rely on SOD for protection against oxidative damage and inflammation—key factors in both acne and wrinkles. Unfortunately, SOD production drops off sharply as you get older, so supplementing is a must. But there's a catch: Most SOD supplements don't survive your digestive system, so they don't provide any benefits. Luckily, a brilliant research team

discovered a rare French melon that contains a stable form of SOD, one that survives digestion so it can go to work healing and protecting your skin.

FRENCH GRAPE SEED EXTRACT

French grape seed extract supplies entirely different antioxidants than SOD. These are known as oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs), and they also fight premature aging and oxidative damage. One study also found that French grape seed extract had a strengthening effect on collagen and elastin—and that could mean firmer, smoother skin for you. Just make sure to look for a tannin-free supplement to ensure maximum absorption and bioavailability.



These individual herbs and nutrients all supply superior skin benefits, and they may work even better when they team up. A French clinical study found that a combination of French grape seed extract, French melon SOD, zinc, and vitamin C helped rejuvenate dull, aging skin in just eight weeks. Women taking this combo saw glowing results: Their skin was 25.9 percent more luminous, 62.3 percent more radiant, and 55.8 percent firmer. As an added bonus, some women reported that their dark undereye circles and skin imperfections (like redness and spots) improved significantly.

Adding these anti-aging, anti-acne powerhouses into your daily routine can help your skin look its best—but they can't do it alone. Tending to your overall health with solid sleep, nutrient-dense foods, and stress reduction (at least as much as you can) will also help you put your best face forward. ■



Michele Cagan is a natural health writer. She loves digging through the latest research on herbs and nutrients to track down the most effective natural ways to manage common health issues.