

# Eat your Veggies

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We were all told growing up that you need to eat your vegetables to be fit and healthy and that eating right can help to prevent disease. But there are other reasons to eat your veggies as well, for instance, if you want to look your best. Because what you put in your body is reflected on the outside. Yes, that's right, vegetables are important for healthy skin, hair and nail growth. Why? Because vegetables are the source for many of the nutrients that keep your skin glowing, your nails growing and your hair strong and lush.

In order for your nails to be as strong as your genetics allow, your body needs lots of iron. Iron can be found in your leafy greens like spinach, collard greens and swiss chard. Another important nutrient for nail growth is an absorbable calcium. No worries for vegans and dairy-free diets, broccoli and kale are a great source of that calcium. In fact, in studies comparing kale to milk, kale wins. Kale supplies 250 mg of calcium per 100 grams consumed while milk offers 110 mg per 100 grams. Lastly, you need to make sure you have enough folate (Vit. B 9) in your diet. Among the many things that this nutrient supports is healthy cell division. You can get your folate from asparagus (which is also a great prebiotic fiber), beets, brussel sprouts, broccoli and leafy greens.

The important nutrients supplied by vegetables that support healthy skin are Vitamin A and Vitamin C, both of which are critical in preventing premature aging. Vitamin A protects against photodamage. It is also important in collagen production. Collagen production controls keratin production which makes up most of our skin cells. Your skin's elasticity is dependent on collagen and keratin. Vitamin C is another supporter of collagen production. It also profoundly addresses wound healing, an important job for the skin. And Vitamin C's antioxidants fight free radicals in the body which are a major contributor to that premature aging. Vitamin A is in abundant supply in leafy green vegetables. Vitamin C can be found in broccoli, cauliflower and squash.

Not only do the right nutrients promote healthy hair, but the lack of the proper nutrients can lead to hair loss. Those proper nutrients are the same - folate, iron, Vitamin A and Vitamin C as previously discussed. With respect to hair health, iron helps the red blood cells carry oxygen throughout the body which fuels metabolism which aids growth and repair to hair cells. Deficiencies in iron are directly linked to hair loss. Vitamin A and Vitamin C promote collagen production which strengthens hair

strands. Vitamin A helps skin glands produce sebum, the oily substance that moisturizes one's scalp to keep it healthy and supports the roots of your hair. That premature aging Vitamin C's defense system fights against is not only hair loss but even graying hair. All good reasons to eat your veggies! If you're tired of the leafy greens, you can eat sweet potatoes instead. Sweet potatoes are a source of beta-carotene which the body converts to Vitamin A. One medium sweet potato can give you 4 times your daily need of Vitamin A. Another vegetable source for Vitamin C is sweet peppers. One yellow pepper has 3.5 times the Vitamin C found in an orange!

Looking your best, is an additional reason for consuming vegetables in your diet. The following are tips on how to get the most out of your veggies: Buy locally whenever you can. Vegetables shipped in from outside sources travel hundreds of miles. The fresher the vegetable, the more nutrients are still available in them. The freshest source of vegetables is your own garden or from a local farmer. When you can, choose organic. A vegetable's nutrient worth is based on the soil nutrients available to the plant. Organic farming/gardening is all about soil health. Sometimes those organic vegetables don't look as pretty as the conventionally grown vegetables, but they will be richer in nutrients (probably taste better) and help you look prettier.

"A healthy outside starts from the inside." - Robert Urich

"Eat for the body you want, not the body you have." - unknown

"Life expectancy would grow by leaps and bounds if green vegetables smelled as good as bacon." - Doug Larson

"Do your squats. Eat your vegetables. Wear red lipstick. Don't let the boys be mean to you." - unknown