

Can a Pill Make You Prettier?

The lowdown on a slew of new edible beauty products

They say beauty comes from within—and several companies are putting that theory to the test, offering pills and drinks that promise gorgeous hair, skin, and nails. Six testers, plus nutritionist Susan Kraus, M.S., R.D., of Hackensack University Medical Center and Beverly Hills dermatologist Ava Shamban, M.D., see if they live up to the hype.

TAN FROM WITHIN

(1) Rodial Skinny Beach Supplement drink mix, \$59 for 14 packets, blissworld.com

The claim Beta-carotene stimulates the pigmentation in your skin to darken while shielding you from UVB rays.

How to use it Mix one packet of powder with 100 milliliters of water one to two times a day. Your tan will develop after two weeks.

Tester says "I did get a bit bronzed, but I'd hoped for more dramatic results."

Expert's take Kraus: "The beta-carotene could stimulate pigmentation, giving skin a golden hue. But you still need to wear SPF 30 sunscreen daily, because the product won't provide the protection you need."

BOOST OVERALL BEAUTY

(2) Sonya Dakar Ultima Power Shake, \$59, sonyadarkerskinclinic.com

The claim Each 150-calorie shake provides a full daily serving of protein, carbohydrates, dietary fiber, healthy fat, vitamins, and minerals to promote a healthy body and improve hair and skin.

How to use it Blend two scoops of Ultima Power into eight ounces of chilled water twice daily. You should see results in two weeks.

Tester says "It tasted like a strawberry milkshake! My skin was smoother, my hair shinier; and by replacing snacks with the shakes I started losing weight."

Expert's take Shamban: "This product definitely has all the right ingredients, and it's good for you."

BRIGHTEN AND EVEN OUT SKIN TONE

(3) GliSODin Skin Nutrients Advanced Skin Brightening pills, \$80 for 60 pills, spalook.com

The claim Bioflavonoids

(citrus-plant-derived antioxidants) promote even skin tone by inhibiting activity of tyrosinase, the enzyme responsible for hyperpigmentation.

How to use it Take two pills daily with a meal. You'll see results after two weeks.

Tester says "My uneven complexion did start to look a little less red and blotchy."

Expert's take Shamban: "I really like this line—it's nicely formulated and packed with antioxidants."

CLEAR UP ACNE

(4-5) Functionalab Pure Skin pills and Nutrient Tonic shot, \$55 per bottle, \$6 per tonic, functionalab.com

The claim The pills contain lactoferrin and selenium, nutrients that exfoliate skin, maintain hormone balance, and regulate the skin's oil production. The shots protect against free radicals with ingredients like blueberry and açai.

How to use it Depending on the severity of your acne, take one to two capsules a day with meals; use the tonics as often as you want.

Tester says "My acne-prone skin wasn't quite so oily."

Expert's take Kraus: "It may help alleviate acne, but you would get the same results by eating apricots for vitamin C, dairy products for lactoferrin, nuts and whole grains for zinc and vitamin E, and tuna for selenium."

INCREASE SKIN HYDRATION

(6) Crystal Light Skin Essentials drink mix, \$3.29 for seven packets, at grocery stores and Wal-Mart

The claim Lutein and zeaxanthin (pigmented nutrients derived from natural plant extracts) and vitamins A, C, and E help enhance skin elasticity and hydration.

How to use it Empty one packet into two cups of water twice a day.

Tester says "It comes in pomegranate lemonade and white peach tea flavors—both of them tasted great. And my skin felt slightly less dry than usual."

Expert's take Kraus: "The lutein and zeaxanthin contain antioxidants, which maintain the balance of your skin."

TURN BACK THE CLOCK

(7) BeautyScoop drink mix, \$95 for 21 packets, beautyscoop.com

The claim The lipids and peptides in this vanilla-flavored formula boost the body's own regenerative power, reducing the appearance of fine lines.

How to use it Mix one 20-gram pack into four to eight ounces of any drink once a day for three weeks.

Tester says "I was surprised to wake up in the morning and have hydrated skin (it's normally dry), which made my wrinkles less visible."

Expert's take Shamban: "It has plenty of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Your body absorbs the powder faster than it does pills, so you may see results sooner."

—Alexis Farah

