

Beauty manufacturers are taking the concept of inner beauty somewhat literally as of late: Specialized foods, beverages and oral beauty supplements make up a budding category of products that improve your appearance from the inside out, supporting healthy skin, hair, nails and eyes and diminishing visible signs of aging. These "beauty from within" products, also known as nutraceuticals or nutricosmetics, are currently a \$1.5 billion industry. But are these products worth your dollars?

"Most beauty supplements are simply multivitamin, mineral or antioxidant pills that are marketed to improve your appearance," said Lisa Drayer, MA, RD, author of *The Beauty Diet: Looking Great Has Never Been So Delicious*. If you already take supplements, you may already be enhancing your looks.

Lisa also said that when you consume foods rich in antioxidants—specifically a wide variety of fruits and vegetables—you already have a total package of anti-aging substances. But if you don't eat as well as you should, or if you want to target a specific area of concern, then beauty supplements could be for you.

Consult your esthetician or primary doctor before taking oral beauty products, as some brands, like BORBA, use pharmaceutical-grade actives, which might be okay in smaller doses but can be toxic when consumed at high levels. It's also important to note that some supplements are not regulated by the FDA, which means they aren't required to be tested for safety or efficacy before going to market.

Dr. Valerie Callender, a nationally recognized dermatologist based in Glenn Dale, Maryland, believes topical treatments are more effective, so she doesn't typically recommend oral supplements to her patients—with one exception: "I do recommend biotin as a beauty supplement for healthy nails and hair," she said. "I would definitely stand behind that."

For the best results with oral beauty products, do your research on specific brands and supplements. Pinpoint the beauty concern you want addressed and find out the ingredients that will help with that particular concern before buying making a purchase. Don't just go off of a label that says "helps you look younger." You should also look for clinical studies and the results on the efficacy of the products on large groups of individuals.

And if all else fails, Lisa said, remember this old adage: "Anything that sounds too good to be true probably is." **S**

Inside-Out Beauty

by Jan F. Lee

Pretty Potions

If you want to give an oral beauty product a try, here's a sampling of what's available.



Sibu Cellular Support

The sea buckthorn berry has been proven to improve skin tone and texture. The fruit also supports hair and nail growth through Omega fatty acids 3, 6 and 9, and the elusive Omega 7 fatty acids, which are major building-blocks for healthy skin. (\$29.95, sibubeaauty.com)



BORBA Replenishing Aqua-less Crystalline Packettes

BORBA claims to even out skin's texture and tone. This beverage mixture, powered by the lychee fruit and antioxidant vitamins C and E, keeps skin firm and boosts moisture. (\$28 for 14 packettes, borba.com)

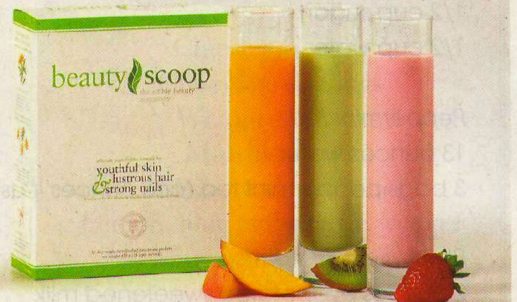


Sprayology Rejuvenation Plus

This homeopathic spray promises to relieve the signs of aging and achieve smoother-looking skin in addition to boosting your energy. (\$32, sprayology.com)

BeautyScoop

In double-blind clinical trials, 86 percent of people reported an improvement in skin, hair and nails after drinking BeautyScoop, thanks to key ingredients of safflower, canola flower, soy protein isolate and whey protein concentrate. (\$95 for 21-day supply, beautyscoop.com)



Intelligent Nutrients Intellimmune Oil

Two teaspoons of this certified organic seed oil blend are equivalent to the antioxidant power of 10 pounds of grape seeds. Intellimmune Oil promises to work to slow down signs of aging and heal present damage. (\$45, intelligentnutrients.com)

Appearex Nail Biotin Supplement

Biotin, a type of B vitamin that stimulates epidermal cells, makes nails less brittle and strengthens keratin, the protein structure found in nails and hair. (\$14.99, CVS drugstores)

