



Inside-Out Beauty

INCREASINGLY, SKINCARE PRODUCTS ARE SWALLOWED RATHER THAN APPLIED TO THE SKIN. **TINA WANG** EXAMINES HOW EFFECTIVE THEY REALLY ARE



SKIN DEEP
Dermalogica
multivitamin
power
concentrate

IN THE NAME OF PUTTING ONE'S BEST face forward, beauty rituals have gone through a constant evolution over the decades, going from plain rudimentary to quite radical. The 1980s and 90s were about keeping skin problems at bay. The Holy Trinity of cleanse-tone-moisturise was created to prevent wrinkles and acne. Numerous women embraced products by brands such as Clinique, which was especially known for its pretty packaging, colourful lotions and exquisite bars of facial soap.

Now, in the new millennium, the words on everyone's lips are renewal and regeneration. More steps have been added to the proverbial To Do list, including the application of anti-ageing lotions and potions designed for the eye, cheek, neck and décolletage.

At the same time, women are embracing a switch in beauty philosophy, assimilating the concept of wellness from the inside out, and in the process creating a whole new beauty formula:

cleanse-tone-moisturise-gain anti-ageing benefits-wear sunblock-pop a pill or drink a beverage.

Oral supplements herald a more holistic approach to beauty. A form of nourishment to strengthen the skin's collagen, elastin and moisture-retaining elements for a more supple, youthful complexion, such pills and drinks work from within to nourish and improve the skin's overall quality, structure and appearance. They often contain ingredients such as vitamins A, E and C, grape seed extract and coenzyme Q10, along with eyebrow-raising ones such as sheep's placenta.

According to market-research company Euromonitor, this inside-out approach to beauty has surged in popularity during the past several years. But its origins can be traced back to the 90s, when dermatologists Nicholas Perricone and Howard Murad launched both skincare and dietary supplement lines in tandem. Murad has become widely known for pills for acne, skin firming and toning for cellulite and stretch marks, wrinkle reducing, and sun protection. And since



the 90s, Avon, Olay, Imedeen and Estée Lauder's Origins have jumped on the "beauty through nutrition" bandwagon alongside brands such as Fancél, Nature's Answer, Derma-Rx and numerous others, particularly from Japan.

This year, Derma-Rx launched its Skin Supplement, a range of pale green tablets that prevent wrinkles and offer UV protection. SK Tan, director of The Derma-Rx Clinic, says the response to these supplements "has been good; individuals who were pleased with the effects of the old formula were thrilled that the new formula now contains added sun-protection benefits."

The appeal of such products is not difficult to understand, given their ease of consumption – especially as many people today consume poor diets, which do nothing for the condition of their complexions or their overall well-being. But not all dermatologists are convinced that supplements are necessary.

"Vitamins can be absorbed intact through the skin when formulated in appropriate delivery systems, resulting in a higher concentration of the vitamin in the skin than can be delivered via oral supplementation," says Wong Su Ni of Dr SN Wong Skin, Hair, Nails & Laser Specialist Clinic at Singapore's Mount Elizabeth Medical Centre.

Adds Low Chai Ling, director of The Sloane Clinic, also in Singapore: "Oral supplements have been much hyped up over the recent years. It is

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important to remember that, much like dietary supplements, oral beauty supplements are designed to supplement your diet, not to replace nutritious foods. The only scenario where I will find them helpful is when there are shortfalls in your diet such as when you are pregnant, nursing, elderly or strict vegetarian. Most of us will consume enough vitamins and minerals when we eat a well-balanced diet. A handful of vitamins, minerals or other dietary supplements can never take the place of a healthy diet."

Derma-Rx's Tan agrees, and also stresses that oral supplements should also be paired with a consistent beauty ritual. "Most oral beauty supplements contain powerful antioxidants that have beneficial effects on the entire body, and not the skin alone. However, the antioxidant effects do not encompass the elimination of hyper-pigmentation and the cleansing of pores, which can be achieved primarily by adherence to a proper skincare routine. As the name suggests, [Skin Supplement] is a supplement, and has synergistic effects with topical treatments," he says.

If you'd like something more palatable than pills, then there's always what is possibly the most unlikely beauty product on the planet: the Borba Clarifying Anti-Blemish Chocolate Bar. The brainchild of celebrity aesthetician Scott Vincent Borba and Singapore-born, California-based chocolatier Kristy Choo of Jin Patisserie, each US\$8 handmade bar of dark chocolate – containing walnut husk, extracts of pomegranate and green tea, and Borba's Skin Balance Clarifying Aqua-Less crystalline powder – is supposed to help remove toxins and improve skin clarity. Which is great, except that as we've seen, good diet is the most important factor in maintaining a clear complexion – and the existence of a skin-cleansing chocolate bar makes it increasingly difficult to work out exactly what a good diet is. ■



SAVING FACE
CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP LEFT
SK Tan of the Derma-Rx Clinic; Borba skin balance water; celebrity aesthetician Scott Vincent Borba

ORAL FIXATION Here are some of today's best-known edible beauty supplements

IMEDEEN PILLS Specially selected ingredients for moisture enhancement, skin-building properties and antioxidant defence include soy extract, vitamin C and the brand's exclusive Biomarine Complex, rich in proteins and polysaccharides similar to those naturally found in skin's supporting tissue.

THE DERMA-RX SKIN SUPPLEMENT (SS) WITH NEW SUN PROTECTION FORMULA PILLS Made from marine-derived proteins, polysaccharides and antioxidants, its star ingredient is poly-

podium leucotomos extract; derived from tropical ferns, it contains strong antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties to protect against sunburn.

DERMALOGICA MULTIVITAMIN POWER CONCENTRATE By harnessing the robust properties of simple, everyday vitamins, Dermalogica has developed a unique skin supplement that helps reduce signs of premature ageing. Through a concentrated dose of vitamin A for elasticity, C for natural collagen and E for tissue regeneration,

its powerful multivitamin capsules defend against free radicals while promoting natural, healthy skin.

MURAD PURE SKIN CLARIFYING SUPPLEMENT PILLS Containing vitamins and extracts to prevent acne break-outs, these pills complement your daily vitamin intake. The company claims that blemishes can be reduced by 55 per cent in six weeks. The recommended intake is two tablets in the morning and two in the evening, preferably with meals.

