

The skinny on wrinkle-free skin

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Wrinkles may be a natural part of getting older, but you can slow your skin's aging with changes to your lifestyle and environment, a skin expert says.

"Daily activities, such as protecting your [skin](#) from the sun and eating healthy foods, can go a long way in preventing your skin from aging more quickly than it should," dermatologist Dr. Michele Green said in an American Academy of Dermatology news release.

Sun exposure is a major cause of premature skin aging. Protect your skin from the sun by seeking shade, wearing sun-protective clothing—including a lightweight, long-sleeved shirt, pants, a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses with UV protection—and by applying a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher to all skin not covered by clothing.

Clothing with an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF) number on the label will provide the greatest sun protection.

Here are some other ways in which you can

protect your skin:

- Apply a facial moisturizer every day. Moisturizers trap water in the skin, giving it a more youthful appearance. Consider using a moisturizer that contains sunscreen, but remember that sunscreen needs to be reapplied every two hours when you're outdoors.
- Limit face washing to twice daily and after sweating, and use [skin care products](#) labeled "hypoallergenic," "fragrance-free" or "non-comedogenic."
- Don't scrub your skin or use skin care products that sting or burn.
- Avoid repetitive facial movements such as squinting, frowning or holding a straw or cigarette in your mouth, which can cause wrinkles over time.
- Never use tanning beds.
- Don't smoke.
- Drink alcohol in moderation.
- Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables. This may help prevent damage that leads to premature skin aging.
- Exercise regularly to improve circulation and boost the immune system, which may give the skin a more youthful appearance.
- Consider using a retinol cream, which is a derivative of vitamin A.

And there is always professional help available.

"If you're worried about aging skin, talk to a board-certified dermatologist," Green said. "There are plenty of treatments available, including noninvasive procedures, to help smooth wrinkles, tighten skin and improve your complexion."

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Aging has more about [aging and skin care](#).

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