

YOUR SKIN — A PROGRAM FOR AGELESS BEAUTY

*Inner and outer beauty are the foundation of lasting beauty — beauty that does
not fade with age.*

— Maharishi Ayurveda



Beauty is an essential aspect of our being. As women, we invest a tremendous amount of time, energy, and money in how we look and feel. Yet, we are often frustrated and disappointed with the outcome, because we measure beauty by standards set by the fashion and cosmetic industry — the “perfect” faces and bodies seen on every magazine rack. We are left feeling flawed and inferior by comparison and long for an ideal of beauty that has the power to unlock what is magnificent and unique in each of us.

After menopause, these challenges only increase. The pharmaceutical and medical industries, take advantage of our vulnerability, and offer us Botox, facelifts, prescription exfoliants, and the HT “solution,” promising through drugs and surgery what we can have naturally when our physiology is in balance — youthful beauty that lasts.

FEMININE FOREVER — THE MYTH OF HT

Published in the 1960s, the best-selling book *Feminine Forever*, by Dr. Robert Wilson, promised a cure that offered youth and beauty through drugs, specifically Premarin, made from the urine of pregnant horses. According to the *New York Times*,



Wilson's son stated in 2002 that the drug company Wyeth-Ayerst (the makers of Premarin) had paid for writing the book and had financed Dr. Wilson's lectures to women's groups on the benefits of hormone replacement. In those youth-obsessed times, when Marilyn Monroe was the ideal, women quickly bought into the idea that a single pill, HT, could keep them wrinkle-free, with lustrous hair and sensuous bodies, well after their ovaries had ceased to produce eggs.

Although the myth of HT hangs on, scientific studies do not support the idea that loss of estrogen causes the wrinkling and sagging of skin, which often marks beauty's decline at midlife. *Aging* does that, and aging effects can be largely prevented with the natural, holistic approaches already presented in this book. Even if taking estrogen *were* helpful to your aging skin, the risks revealed in the Women's Health Initiative make the cost too high. We now know better than to trust a single drug or hormone therapy to keep us youthful.

Scientifically, there are very few studies on estrogen's ability to prevent wrinkles and sagging skin. Estrogen has been known to bolster *collagen* — the protein that provides firmness to connective tissue — for a smooth skin, but a Spanish study showed that estrogen didn't prevent the expected loss of collagen that occurs with age. Another study assessed collagen content of the skin of women taking HT and found that these women had slightly more collagen than those who weren't on HT. However, this study isn't very significant since most women who chose to take HT were healthier in the first place.

Many women tell me they stopped taking HT, or were unhappy with it because of the effect it had on their skin. The package insert for Premarin clearly states that it does not help your skin, and even lists as one of the side effects "a spotty darkening of the skin, particularly on the face." Ayurvedically, pitta dosha is responsible for the metabolism, coloration and glow of the skin, and HT throws it out of balance, causing such effects. Some women have further pitta disturbances from HT, such as acne in their fifties or red, itchy patches (usually after sixty).

Still, many women cling to the hope that by taking HT they will achieve eternal, wrinkle-free youth and sensuality. This belief persists, even though there is no scientific evidence to support it. When HT is no longer seen as a viable option, we are faced with a sobering dilemma: Without drugs or hormones, how do we maintain a youthful appearance at menopause and beyond? Ayurvedically speaking, we must first ask a more profound question: What do we mean by *beauty*?

A NEW PARADIGM OF BEAUTY

The ancient science of MAV presents a "new" paradigm of beauty for modern women that cannot be mass marketed, but rather allows you to become the



most radiant and peaceful expression of your own unique self. In the MAV ideal, beauty is not about conforming to a specific facial structure, eye color, or body size — it is about the entire vision of beauty that shines outward from within. Your outer appearance reveals the depth of your wholeness as a person, including your intelligence, personality, emotions, and your relationship to those around you.

In Western cultures, youthful appearance is worshipped, while we rarely appreciate beauty in older women. Growing older is dreaded as a passage in which we lose our outer, or surface, beauty, and have no other paradigm to fall back on. But in the more traditional culture of India, older women are the gurus, or teachers, of the young. Aging is associated with wisdom, authority, and prestige, and women wear the glow of inner knowing that brings confidence, self-respect, and self-worth. They seem to grow more beautiful with age, not less.

Subhanga Karanam — The MAV Definition of Beauty

Maharishi Ayurveda offers a precise term for beauty — *subhanga karanam* — based on three root words from Sanskrit: *subha*, which means “auspicious”; *anga*, which means “body part”; and *karanam*, which means “transformation.” True beauty is present when all parts of your body are transformed to the most auspicious, or promising level. To paraphrase this ancient description, we might say that beauty is the promise of your unique being radiantly transformed and shining through your physical body.

Have you ever met a woman who looked especially radiant and unforgettable, attractive beyond beautiful? This is the inner power of *subhanga karanam* shining through to the surface. You can read a woman’s sense of self-worth on her face, and when it is there, it makes her beautiful. The better we feel about ourselves, the more attractive we look to others.

The Three Pillars of Beauty

Maharishi Ayurveda believes true beauty as supported by three pillars. *Roopam*, or outer beauty; *gunam*, or inner beauty; and *vayastyag* or lasting beauty. Together, these three pillars give a balanced approach to beauty that guides us in specific care and treatment regimens to bring about the transformation to true beauty.

Roopam (Outer Beauty)

The outer signs of beauty — your skin, hair, and nails — are direct reflections of your overall health. The physiological functions that are responsible for health



must be in balance if you want to maintain outer aspects of your appearance. This depends more on the strength of your metabolism, the quality of your diet, and the purity of your blood and plasma than on external creams or your hairstylist's skill.

Keeping your tissues clear of ama, and supporting your digestion as well as eating a pure diet, make all the difference. Follow the Healing Meal Plan (Chapter 4) and drink your personalized wise water, (Chapters 6), to see quick results in your skin. This regimen has yielded rewarding results for many of my patients, especially those with adult acne and rosacea, conditions that may easily worsen with less gentle approaches.

Also, follow the more specific recommendations in Chapter 6 for clearing your dhatus, especially *rasa* (for wrinkles and lack of luster), *rakta* (for inflammation and redness), *mamsa* (for acne and boils), and *meda* (for excessive oil or inflamed sweat glands). This will eliminate ama and toxins that may be irritating or dulling your skin. It will also improve your digestion (agni), providing more nourishment to your skin, which may be depleted and lacking lubrication, substance, and fullness. Without adequate nourishment, your collagen layer thins and a kind of wasting takes place. Over time, your skin can shrivel up like a plant without water — due *not* to a lack of estrogen, but to these largely correctable imbalances.

Gunam (Inner Beauty)

Inner beauty is authentic beauty, not the kind that shows on a made-up face, but the kind that shines through from your soul, your consciousness, or inner state of being. Gunam reflects that your mind and heart are in harmony, not at odds and causing emotional confusion, loss of confidence, stress, or worry. When you are not at peace, an illusory appearance prevails, and your outer beauty has little meaning.

Maintain your self-confidence and a warm, loving personality by paying attention to lifestyle and daily routine, managing stress through meditation, eating your main meal at midday, and going to bed early. Herbal supplements can help, as well. Remember, kindness, friendliness and sincerity can make a person attractive, while being uptight or tense makes people want to walk the other way, regardless of your facial structure, body weight, or other outer signs we associate with attractiveness.

Vayastyag (Lasting Beauty)

Lasting beauty means eternal beauty that is ageless. This is the pillar most relevant to women over forty, because it addresses the issues of antiaging and rejuvenation. Modern science and MAV agree that aging is due in great part to the damage caused by free radical oxidation of your cells and tissues. Free radicals are created when you are exposed to pollutants, chemicals, and poor nutrition, and even



stress, all of which hasten the aging process. In contrast, retarding free radicals by reducing stress, eating well, and cleansing your body of toxic wastes slows the aging process. MAV prescribes a specific anti-aging regimen of diet, lifestyle recommendations, herbal skin care products, and herbal supplements, such as *Amrit Kalash* shown in published research to slow biological aging and offer 1,000 times more powerful protection against free radicals than the popular antioxidants vitamins C and E.

MAV also looks at social and psychological factors involved in aging. A peaceful home life and nourishing relationships are important to curb social aging. To prevent psychological aging, a low-stress lifestyle and spiritual practices such as the Transcendental Meditation technique have a profound effect on how you feel on the inside—which determines how radiant and beautiful you look on the outside.

A Balanced Approach

In MAV, all three pillars of beauty are considered equally important when treatments and care regimens are introduced. For example, *roopam*, the outer appearance of beauty, is approached by first restoring balance at the fundamental level of your physiology. Then, your body will naturally create more healthy and structurally sound skin cells continuously as you age, supporting *vayastyag*, or lasting beauty. Without inner beauty, *gunam*, the other kinds of beauty will seem empty and superficial, a kind of false beauty we see so often in the soulless expressions of many supermodels and some popular movie stars.

In contrast, Western care regimens emphasize outer beauty only, making for a lopsided approach that sacrifices a person's overall well-being for an immediate, short-term result. We see this when harsh chemicals are used in a skin care product to dry up oily skin, but ultimately cause dryness and premature wrinkles. The three pillars allow us to treat not only outer appearance, but all other levels, including the senses, mind, and spirit, laying the foundation for a truly balanced and holistic approach to beauty care.

Ideal Routine for Ideal Skin

To understand how significantly lifestyle impacts your skin, a mini-lesson in Ayurvedic physiology of the skin is in order. The most important principle to understand is that your skin is a mirror of the purity of the blood that feeds it. If you have toxic, preservative-laden, trans-fatty foods in your blood from a heavy restaurant meal the night before, you can expect that these pro-inflammatory substances in your bloodstream will promote inflammation, irritation, hyperpigmentation, or other disfiguring conditions.



Fortunately, our skin has a daily cleansing cycle that helps it purify toxins and protect its youthful, healthy glow. This cycle occurs during the nighttime “pitta” time from 10 P.M. to 2 A.M. If you are sleeping during this time, your skin and body can effectively cleanse themselves of leftover toxins and wastes accumulated in the cells during the day. But if you are up and about after 10 P.M., your energy is being used for other activity and your body’s cleansing cycle is weakened. Not only that, but after 10 P.M., your pitta-fired appetite “kicks in” demanding the proverbial “midnight snack.” The end result is food coming *in* at a time the body wants to get *rid* of leftover food and toxins, further thwarting your skin’s nighttime “beauty cycle.”

Another beauty buster occurs when we sleep in to try to make up for staying up late. Lying in bed after 6 A.M. tends to increase kapha, your sluggish, liquidy dosha. The result is a puffy face and bags under the eyes. This situation is compounded if you ate a rich or heavy meal later in the evening, another kapha-increasing habit. These kapha-aggravating habits can also make you gain weight.

Five Magical Tips for Ageless Beauty

To keep your face looking youthful and beautiful, your figure trim, and to improve your overall health, follow these five magical tips to ageless beauty. I call these “magical,” because I have found that within only a few days, most women notice a new-found healthy glow and freshness in their faces just from following even one of these simple tips.

- Go to bed and turn your light off by 9:45 P.M. and get up by 6 A.M.
- Take a walk for at least ten minutes outdoors in the fresh air within an hour or two of sunrise.
- Eat fresh, pure, organic foods with lots of sweet, juicy fruits and vegetables during the day.
- Drink plenty of pure spring water during the day (room temperature or warm, not cold).
- Eat a light evening meal without meat, rich sauces, or cheese by 7 P.M. at the latest.



YOUR SKIN AND LASTING BEAUTY

Your skin, the sense organ that covers your entire face and body, is perhaps the foremost marker of your physical beauty. It is also the first place to show signs of aging, such as wrinkles, brown spots, sagging, and drooping. Because your skin is so pivotal in causing an aging appearance, I will concentrate my explanations and recommendations in the remainder of this chapter on the Maharishi Ayurveda understanding and treatment of your skin. The Vedic prescriptions, however, contain a wealth of knowledge to cover other aspects of beauty, such as hair, nails, and sensuality, but they are too lengthy to cover in a single chapter.

Your Skin's Natural Intelligence

According to MAV, your skin, like all of your organs, tissues, and cells, has intelligence. Our modern science supports this claim of the skin's intelligence by pointing out that each square inch of skin contains 1,300 nerve endings, creating a direct link between skin and brain. Think of your skin as an extension of your nervous system, enabling it to be directly influenced by your thoughts and emotions. We know that skin breakouts and rashes go hand in hand with emotional upsets, especially in adolescence, and this may occur again around menopause, when hormones are fluctuating.

MAV understands your mind-body connection in terms of the doshas. *Vyana vata*, a subdivision of vata dosha located throughout the entire body, governs your skin's overall physiology through communication and circulation, and provides the sensitive, *feeling* aspect of your skin. Closely connected to vyana vata is *prana vata*, another subdivision of vata which governs your mind. When your skin senses heat and cold, the information goes via vyana vata to prana vata — from the skin to the brain. “Cold” is information that flows from the skin to the brain. Information flowing from the brain back to the body might be: “I need a blanket!”

Because your skin is suffused with nature's intelligence, it can rejuvenate naturally when this intelligence is supported and enhanced. In other words, aging skin can become young again. MAV prescribes specific diet, lifestyle, care regimens and herbal formulations that contain balanced and enlivening ingredients to awaken the inherent power of your skin to stay youthful.

Your Skin after Menopause

We have seen that loss of estrogen does not necessarily cause your skin to wrinkle and sag, while the effects of aging can. Why then does women's skin show



signs of aging more than men's skin? This gender gap is all too painfully apparent when men in their forties and fifties, and sometimes beyond, retain firm, smooth skin. It's even a cliché that men grow more "distinguished" with age, while we women simply lose our beauty.

Despite such culturally reinforced beliefs, there *is* a real biological reason for the differences in aging male and female skin. Female hormones make women's skin softer and thinner, while male hormones, such as testosterone, give men thicker and harder skin which is more resistant to wrinkling. Also, in women, the secretion of oil from the fat layer in the skin is generally less than for a man, so women's skin is drier and thinner, making it more prone to the effects of aging.

All the factors that contribute to women's skin aging faster than men's become even more pronounced when hormones fluctuate at menopause. As estrogen levels decline, your skin's sebaceous glands produce less oil, and the underlying lipid, or fat, layer becomes even thinner. Without its natural emollients, your skin has a tendency to dry out more easily and lose its softness, all signs of this vata-dominated time of life. Wrinkles and lines appear on your face. There is also a thinning of the protective layer on top of the skin, making it more photo-sensitive and less tolerant of dry and windy weather which can easily irritate it. As skin gets more sensitive, it becomes more prone to infection, inflammation, dermatitis, breakout, sunburn, and allergens. Doshically, this kind of stress to the skin aggravates your pitta dosha, further adding to the irritability of your skin.

Other structural changes happen with menopause. The flow of blood to your skin decreases as you age, bringing less nutrition to skin cells and causing skin to heal more slowly. Lack of oils and fatty substances due to hormonal fluctuations and increasing vata deprive your skin of essential nutrients, further depleting it. Undernourished skin looks sallow, nonvital and drained of color and brightness, as if it were starving or wasting away. Collagen synthesis falls off due to hormonal fluctuation, further decreasing your skin's firmness and elasticity.

Katerina's Story

Katerina is fifty-eight-year-old writer from California who has followed the program outlined in this book for several years and has also been to The Raj for Maharishi Rejuvenation Treatment. She was so pleased with the effects of her MAV treatments that when I asked her if she would write a brief account of her experience, she was thrilled. Here is her story in her own enthusiastic words:

"Wow! What did you do? You look ten years younger." That's what I keep hearing since following Maharishi Ayurveda for menopause. I have to admit that facing menopause scared me. I thought my skin would sag, my muscle tone would go and I would start to look like my grandmother — old before her time. Hormone therapy seemed like the magic pill and I took it. When Dr. Lonsdorf suggested that I follow Maharishi Ayurveda for menopause including stopping the hormones, I thought, "Here I go. I'll be healthy, but I'll look like my grandmother."



Following her advice and treatment, I am healthier and believe me, I look nothing like my grandmother! Following the simple diet and lifestyle changes of Maharishi Ayurveda for menopause I look younger and am the absolute envy of my friends. I feel younger and healthier than I have in years. At my recent forty-year high school reunion, people told me I looked the same as I did forty years ago, only now I glow. Someone recently came up to me at a meeting and said, “I hope you feel as good as you look!” I do.

THE MAHARISHI AYURVEDA APPROACH TO SKIN CARE

The MAV approach to skin care and treatment is first of all holistic. It recognizes that your skin is not separate from the rest of your body, any more than your arm or head is. The skin on your face is also not separate from the skin that covers the rest of your body, and responds by giving you feedback when affected by environmental or dietary factors. Therefore, whatever facial skin therapies we use in MAV are assumed to touch the whole skin, the whole body, and the whole person. For this reason, MAV doesn't treat the skin in isolation, but in the context of the whole physiology and the whole person.

The MAV approach also addresses your skin's natural intelligence with specific dietary, behavioral, and skin care regimens aimed at balancing your doshic tendencies. The dietary and behavioral recommendations for balancing each dosha given in Chapter 4, when followed, will support your skin's health and beauty. Additionally, knowledge of your doshic skin type can give you a precise road map for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of skin problems when they arise.

Your Doshic Skin Type

For simplicity, we can translate your doshic tendencies here as *skin types*: vata skin type, pitta skin type, and kapha skin type. Each doshic skin type will be described in terms of skin qualities, inclination toward certain problems, and the ideal regimen to make your skin type radiant. As you read the descriptions of skin types below, try to identify which is yours, then follow my prescriptions and care regimens for any imbalances you may be experiencing.

Vata Skin

Vata is composed of the elements of air and space. If you have a vata skin type, your skin will be dry, thin, fine-pored, delicate and cool to the touch. If vata skin



is imbalanced, it will be prone to excessive dryness and may even be rough and flaky. The greatest beauty challenge for your skin is its disposition to symptoms of early aging. Your skin tends to develop wrinkles earlier than the other beauty types, and, if your digestion is not in balance, your skin will begin to look dull and gray even in early life. In addition, your skin may have a tendency for disorders such as dry eczema.

Pitta Skin

Pitta dosha is composed of the elements of fire and water. If you have a pitta skin type your skin is fair, soft, warm, and of medium thickness. Your hair typically is fine and straight, and is usually red, sandy, or blond in color. Your complexion tends toward the pink or reddish, and there is often a copious amount of freckles or moles.

Among the many beauty challenges of pitta skin types is your tendency to develop rashes, rosacea, acne, liver spots, or pigment disorders. Because of the large proportion of the fire element in your constitution, your skin does not tolerate heat very well. Of all the three skin types, pitta skin has the least tolerance for the sun, is photosensitive, and most likely to accumulate sun damage over the years. Tanning treatments and therapies that involve excessive use of facial or whole body steam can be counterproductive for your skin. Whereas vata skin gets aggravated by mental stress, your skin tends to get aggravated by emotional stress, such as suppressed anger, frustration, or resentment.

Kapha Skin

Kapha dosha is composed of the elements of earth and water. If you have a kapha skin type your skin is thick, oily, soft, and cool to the touch. Your complexion is pale, and the hair thick, wavy, oily, and dark. Kapha skin types tend to develop wrinkles much later in life than vata or pitta types. If your skin becomes imbalanced, it can show up as enlarged pores, excessively oily skin, moist types of eczema, blackheads or pimples, and water retention. Kapha skin is also more prone to fungal infections.

MAV Care Regimens for Your Skin Type

Care regimens for your doshic skin type include cleansing, hydrating, moisturizing, and nourishing your skin to keep it glowing with youthful health. Follow my specific recommendations and formulations for each skin type as given below.



Care Regimen for Vata Skin

Because of the predominance of the space and air element in vata skin, the moisture holding capacity of your skin is limited, and so your beauty care program should emphasize hydration. Your skin needs to be hydrated both from internal and external sources. To hydrate the skin from inside, you should drink at least eight glasses of water a day and eat plenty of sweet, juicy fruits. Externally, your skin will benefit from applying a high-quality moisturizing lotion twice per day. Moisturizers made from formulas prescribed in the ancient Vedic texts, provide a superior source of moisture for vata skin. Because vata skin is thin and delicate, it typically does not respond well to the harsh, chemical ingredients that are in most moisturizers today, so choosing a moisturizer that does not use artificial preservatives or ingredients is important.

Vata Cleansing Recipe. The milk, oat, and marshmallow soap substitute described below helps to nourish and lubricate menopausal vata skin. It also provides a safe and nourishing cleanse to enhance firmness, luster, and glow without having any short-term or long-term drying or irritating effect.

- 70% rolled oats
- 10% marshmallow root
- 10% Indian sarsaparilla
- 10% lavender flowers

Make up a large batch of these ingredients and store in a dry place. For each cleansing of your face and body, put 2 tablespoons in a cheesecloth bag and dip bag in lukewarm, whole, organic milk. Pat your face and body and rinse for five minutes. Apply a very thin layer of pure aloe vera gel or almond oil to finish. If you have a lot of toxins under your skin, however, it won't tolerate full-strength oil without breaking out. So for the first couple of weeks of this regimen, apply a mixture of 99 percent rosewater and 1 percent ylang ylang essential oil as a toner after cleansing. Always use a natural, nourishing, and lubricating day cream or night cream, preferably one that is herbally balanced according to MAV principles. (See the Resources for product information.)

Care Regimen for Pitta Skin

In caring for your pitta skin, emphasize therapies that have a calming influence on the skin, as well as protecting your skin from the sun and heat. Like vata skin, pitta skin is highly sensitive and tends to become irritated by cleansers or moisturizers that contain synthetic chemicals. Be sure to include ghee and rose petal conserve in your diet, favor cool, sweet foods, and avoid spicy foods. A preshower



massage with coconut oil is a wonderful way to both cool pitta and to moisturize your sensitive skin.

Externally, your skin will benefit from applying a high-quality moisturizer with herbs that help to calm the nerves of the skin. Moisturizers made from formulas without irritating additives, as prescribed in the ancient Vedic texts, provide a superior source of moisture for sensitive pitta skin, while at the same time providing deep nourishment for the tactile nerves, your skin's emotional mediators.

Pitta Cleansing Recipe. Pitta skin needs a cooling and nurturing cleanser, based on the following recipe:

- 70% rolled oats
- 10% rose petal
- 10% Indian sarsaparilla
- 10% red sandalwood

Use the same method to make a cleansing rinse as described for vata, only use room temperature whole milk. After cleansing, a mixture of 80 percent coconut oil and 20 percent jojoba oil can be applied on the skin. Again, if your skin has much toxicity, it will not tolerate the oil well, and a rosewater toner should be substituted for the first few weeks of your regimen. (Follow the recipe for rosewater toner given in the Vata Care Regimen above, but substitute jojoba oil for ylang ylang oil.) A natural, nourishing, and lubricating day cream or night cream, preferably one that is herbally balanced according to MAV principles is recommended to lock in the moisture gained through your cleansing routine and to further nourish and protect your skin. (See the Resources for product information.)

Care Regimen for Kapha Skin

The key to beauty care for kapha skin types is proper cleansing, as kapha individuals are more prone to accumulating toxins than the other types. Avoid heavy, greasy, cold or sweet foods and do cook with pungent spices, such as ginger and pepper. Include lots of fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet to support cleansing from within.

Your kapha skin needs frequent, in-depth cleansing and facials, using clay to exfoliate and draw out impurities such as dead skin and ama. MAV recommends first loosening the impurities by lubricating your skin. Externally, your skin will benefit from applying a high-quality moisturizer with herbs that help to detoxify the skin. Especially those made from formulas prescribed in the ancient Ayurvedic texts provide a superior source of moisture for the Kapha skin while at the same time helping to eliminate impurities in the skin. (See the Resources for product information.)



Kapha Cleansing Recipe. To cleanse your kapha skin, use the following:

- 70% rolled oats
- 10% orange peel
- 10% Indian sarsaparilla
- 10% oat bran

Use the same method for preparing the milk cleanse as described for vata and pitta, this time with warm milk. After cleansing and rinsing, apply a natural, homemade toner. Mix together 3 parts rosewater to 1 part aloe vera gel (fresh from the plant is best, or from a pure, bottled source that has no added ingredients) and gently apply a few drops to your face. Do not use any oil, only the natural *Youthful Skin Cream* (see below) for day or night, since your kapha skin is already rich in oil.

MAV SKIN CARE TREATMENTS AND PRODUCTS

Skin care treatments and products formulated according to true MAV principles are unique in that they address and support the intelligence level of your skin. A well-balanced formulation that has nature's healing and nurturing power, whether in the form of an internal supplement or a topical cream, can awaken your skin's own memory of perfect functioning. An anti-aging formula of this kind works in the long term as a transformational agent to actually make your skin younger by enlivening each skin cell to remember its youth.

The Problem with Today's Popular Skin-Care Treatments

Sadly, this is hardly the case with the skin care products currently available on the market. When you purchase today's popular products, you are receiving less benefit than advertised, or at best, some mild to severe side effects along with any benefit. Most popular "natural" face creams, even spa quality formulas and those that call themselves Ayurvedic, contain as little as 1 percent herbal ingredients, and in many cases contain only a fraction of a percent of herbal extracts. In addition, many skin products contain harsh chemical solvents used in processing and are subjected to high, potentially damaging temperatures. This can create long-term damage to the deeper layers of the skin, distorting nature's intelligence as it creates new cells.



Most popular skin care products today are unhealthy for your skin because they are made according to the modern medical notion of *single-cause/single-effect*, the infamous “magic bullet” approach. The erroneous belief is that by simply adding multiple ingredients to a cream or gel base you will get multiple benefits. But this is not the case. No modern delivery system or approach to combining ingredients has resulted in a truly effective, side-effect-free botanical product with multiple benefits. Products containing chemical ingredients, such as *alpha hydroxy acids* (AHA), *beta hydroxy acids* (BHA), and *retinal*, are all designed by juggling the amount of chemical extract needed to achieve the desired “dewrinkling” effects versus the side effects of dryness, irritation (and eventually *more* wrinkling) that the chemical ultimately produces.

The common ingredient AHA works by peeling away the top layer of dead cells to reduce the appearance of fine lines. However, women are beginning to discover the problems with this harsh approach, such as increased sensitivity to the sun, and dry, irritated skin. Continued use of these products can actually lead to premature aging and wrinkles — not exactly the effects you expect when you purchase a skin cream!

How MAV Formulations Are Different — and Better

MAV follows a very different approach to the formulation of anti-aging skin care products. Unlike modern products, an authentic MAV formula balances its multiple ingredients, using natural herbs instead of chemical isolates, to create a safe synergy rather than a dangerous hodgepodge of ingredients. This natural herbal balance within the formula supports a natural state of balance within the skin, promoting real beauty by making the skin healthier.

The purity of the delivery system is also important. When you apply a product to your skin, it is absorbed by your pores and then into your bloodstream via the vessels in the second layer of your skin. Such transdermal delivery is the reason it’s important to use only all-natural products that are free of synthetic ingredients. Otherwise, as you apply your skin cream, you will be introducing toxic substances (additives, preservatives, and other chemicals) into your blood which can aggravate your liver, your immune system, your pitta dosha, and ultimately your skin. In other words, toxins in your face cream can directly aggravate your skin from the *outside in*, and then boomerang back to do the same from the *inside out*.

The Youthful Skin Line of MAV Products

To preserve the lasting beauty of your skin, I recommend products that are based on a natural blend of herbs without isolated chemical additives and that follow



MAV principles. I personally use and endorse the *Youthful Skin* line of products, produced by Maharishi Ayurveda Products International, which contain a precise combination of whole herb extracts that work together in synergy. Again, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. It took many years of research working with scientists from the West and MAV-trained vaidyas from India to create a skin care line gentle enough for modern-day, Western skin types and that contains 9.5 percent herbal extract — almost 10 times more than popular skin care products. The base of the *Youthful Skin* products is completely natural. It uses grape seed extract as a natural preservative, aroma, and antioxidant all rolled into one.

The two primary herbs in the *Youthful Skin Cream* for the face are *gotu kola* (*Centella asiatica*) and *sensitive plant* (*Lajawanti*). Gotu kola is a legendary *vayasthapana* herb, which means that it helps slow aging. Recently, a French scientist published a study showing that gotu kola improves collagen synthesis in the skin. Sensitive plant is known for its ability to heal nerves at both the surface and deep levels of the skin and enhance tactile sensitivity. It is so sensitive itself that its leaves actually curl up if you touch them. It has a similar benefit for your skin, making the skin cells more alive, sensuous, and balanced.

Another botanical used in the face cream, *Flame of Forest* (*Butea monosperma*), has exceptional sun-protecting qualities that can rejuvenate sun-damaged skin. The bright pigmentation of this plant's flower comes from its bioflavonoids, which are known to protect the plant itself and provide superb sun protection to skin, as well as cooling down inflamed, pitta-type skin disturbances.

The *Youthful Skin Herbal Tablet* helps promote mental calm, contented emotions, and the right balance of skin temperature, moisture, and elasticity. It nourishes what MAV calls the *rohini* layer of your skin. The rohini layer acts as an interface between your blood and your skin. The herbal tablets also help nourish and build healthy tissues and fluids which are essential for healthy skin. The herbs in this formulation are sensitive plant, winter cherry (*ashwagandha*), licorice, gotu kola, and saffron, all prepared in the traditional way to help improve bioavailability and assimilation of nutrients.

Why I Use and Endorse the Youthful Skin Products

The products in the *Youthful Skin* line — face cream, cleanser, toner, and oil — are manufactured in a way that protects nature's intelligence, the deep healing force within every botanical and herb. MAV calls this diligence *sanskara*, or protecting the molecular level of the plant from distortion due to excessive heat or chemical interaction, through each step of the preparation process. This degree of care makes these skin care products superior in purity and potency.

In clinical research in an independent laboratory, *Youthful Skin Cream* was proven to reduce fine lines and wrinkles an average of 33 percent in the first month,



increasing to an average of 40 percent after just three months. Hydration ranged from 23 percent to more than 70 percent in the same three months. Clarity and firmness improved on average 24 percent.

Ayurveda knows that the potency of any herbal plant varies with the seasons, cycles of the moon and time of day. Herbs used in the *Youthful Skin* products are harvested at precisely the ideal time, which makes their potency one hundred times more powerful. After harvesting, each plant must be inspected, sorted, cleaned, and stored in a unique way to protect it from deterioration. A high percentage of each crop is rejected because it does not meet MAV's strict herbal standards for purity, maturity, and potency.

Finally, the herbal laboratory where these skin care products are made (and nearly all the herbal products mentioned in this book) received a prestigious award from the government of India for its high, pharmaceutical-grade standard of quality. The company recently received the International Standards Organization certification for their factory in India, making them the first of any company in India to receive such certification.

While product purity, effectiveness, and authenticity are indispensable, what is most important to me as a physician (and as a woman) is the Youthful Skin Cream's *gentleness*. In more than five years of clinical use, none of my patients has reported any negative side effects with this product. Even women with the most sensitive skin tolerate it well. (Tip: if you have very sensitive skin, apply a very small amount after spritzing your face with rosewater.) Yet, even being so gentle, it gives great results.

Not All Ayurvedic Spa Treatments Are Alike

A word of caution about skin care treatments and spas commonly advertised as "Ayurvedic." The ancient Vedic texts are filled with treatments and recipes that the royal families of India have used for centuries. Some of the more famous procedures include rinsing the skin with gallons of milk, applying floral water rinses to the face and body, and using herbal mud treatments on the skin and hair. These procedures are becoming more commonly known, but most people do not understand the precision required to ensure they are 100 percent nourishing without any side effects.

In many spas today, Vedic modalities are utilized without a complete understanding of MAV and skin types. If you have very sensitive skin, you must be careful to ensure that your aestheticians are properly trained in Ayurvedic skin care. Unfortunately, Western-trained spa aestheticians are usually not very experienced or familiar with Ayurvedic skin care principles and can easily mismatch products and skin types. Furthermore, treatments used successfully in India since ancient times are not all suited to the West. Many would be harsh for Western skin which is thinner and



more sensitive to temperature, pressure, and certain herbs. (See the Resources for information on MAV spas and health clinics.)

MAHARISHI REJUVENATION TREATMENT AND AGELESS BEAUTY

In more than seventeen years of practice in Maharishi Ayurveda, I have found authentic, medically-supervised panchakarma in the form of Maharishi Rejuvenation Treatment to be the single most powerful procedure to quickly turn back the clock for your face and body. Those patients of mine who do MRT at least once a year for five days (or better yet, twice a year) truly do not appear to age. They also report fewer and fewer health problems as time goes by, rather than more and more problems, as is the norm in our culture.

Beyond the enormous health benefits, the effects on personal appearance and beauty can be stunning. A number of women have told me after their MRT treatment that they canceled their plans for a facelift because so many friends and associates were telling them how great they looked! One woman was even asked by her closest friend if she had *had* a facelift!

These remarkable rejuvenation results are due to making “each body part auspicious,” the Ayurvedic definition of beauty. The purifying diet, cleansing therapies and soothing warm oil treatments that comprise MRT work from both the inside out and the outside in to cleanse and restore youthful vitality to all the body parts. This complete approach creates both a pure, healthy, glowing physiology and a rested, relaxed mind that radiates bliss — the essential components of ageless beauty.

A FINAL WORD ABOUT OJAS

You may recall that *ojas* is the Sanskrit term that describes that most refined and subtle physical essence of perfect health, your immune-boosting, anti-aging “bliss factor” permeates your tissues when ama is cleared. Ojas is responsible for facilitating all communication between your mind and body and enhancing Nature’s intelligence at every level. When your ojas is high, you have a healthy glow to your skin, a bright light in your eyes, and your energy, stamina, and immunity are all at their peak. Furthermore, ojas promotes longevity and is an internally generated antidote to aging.

For lasting beauty beyond menopause, you want to maximize the production and maintenance of ojas within your body and mind. The best way to do this is to



transcend stress and suffering through practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique, which I have recommended previously for heart, brain, and emotional health. Practicing Transcendental Meditation helps you to achieve deep inner peace and complete freedom from worry, two hallmarks of true spiritual unfoldment. The Vedic texts tell us that after meditating, the glow of ojas appears on your face, and even advises that you bathe or wash *before*, not after your morning meditation session, because the subtle essence of ojas in your skin promotes strength and immunity throughout the entire day.

Given that your skin is an extension of your mind and nervous system, your emotional well-being is critical to the health and radiance of your skin. For any woman who wants to attain and maintain lasting inner and outer beauty, I recommend cultivating the blissful state of mind that comes from meditating regularly and producing optimal ojas.

One of my most distinguished mentors, an Ayurvedic dermatologist, recalls the words of his father, *vaidya* to India's last royal family and holder of Vedic beauty secrets handed down through the ages: "All blissful beings are beautiful, and all beautiful beings are blissful. There is no beauty without bliss, and no bliss without beauty."

Age knows no boundaries when it comes to bliss. In fact, as we get older, *and wiser*, our capacity for bliss expands. This is the ultimate beauty secret of the ageless woman. As we grow in wisdom and inner fulfillment, we naturally radiate more love, happiness, and peaceful elegance to those around us. As naturally as a clear pool of water brilliantly reflects the splendid rays of the midday sun, our own faces and selves spontaneously convey a beautiful outer radiance, when our inner light is lit with bliss and fulfillment. As we pass on to the next stage of our life's journey, after forty and beyond, Maharishi Ayurveda would advise us: Take care of yourself, be happy, and let your inner bliss flow out — radiating your natural beauty and peacefulness to those around you and through them, to the entire world.