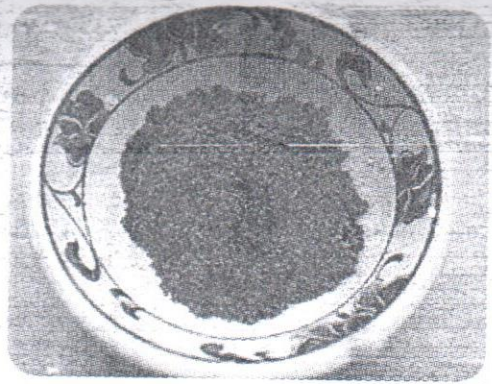


Your skin is a reflection of what you eat



GOOD LIVING

BY SOLOMON KARANJA

A great soldier died in a great battlefield. Aloe was applied to his bruised body after he died. The body of Jesus Christ, too, was treated with aloe and Myrrh (John 19). Three days later, he rose from death.

At two square metres, the skin covers the human body. It is the source of beauty and a clean good skin is a pleasure to the sight.

It is a protective sheath that insulates the body from thermal and mechanical conditions. It also plays a very important role in eliminating excess waste products and has been referred to as the third kidney. Like an external brain, it acts as a sensory organ of touch. The business of maintaining healthy skin is lucrative, explaining why good skin is such a big issue.

Diet plays a prominent role in the conditions of the skin and its related structures – nails and hairs. Skin cells are in constant need of replacement and therefore need a constant supply of nutrients. Many food-based allergies are manifested on the skin. A combination of vitamin E and A maintains healthy skin cells. They are contained in wheat germ, nuts, avocados as well as vegetable oil. Fruits, vegetables, beans and carrots are important in maintaining a healthy skin.

Many skin conditions, especially those that are allergy-related, disappear by eating a diet based on raw fruits and vegetables for several days. Slowly introduce other foods like bread and dairy products until you identify the food(s) that the skin is allergic to.

In many cases the causal agents are additives or spices. It is, therefore, necessary to avoid food with additives and those that have been preserved.

The mango, which is good for the skin, should be eaten while fresh. The best mangoes are smooth and contain little fibre.

The fruit is a masterpiece of nature for its aroma, delicate flavour, dietary and therapeutic properties. Eating mangoes helps in maintaining a

healthy skin. With copious amounts of vitamin A, whose deficiency causes skin dryness and scaling, the mango ensures proper skin hydration and tone. Eating a lot of mangoes is recommended in cases of eczema, dermatitis (skin degeneration), skin dryness and as prevention to premature skin aging.

A 1991 study by Roongpisuthin Pong et al demonstrated that after eating mangoes, the blood glucose level of non-insulin dependent diabetics reduces. This fruit's positive effects on arteries helps prevent blood circulation complications associated with diabetes. Mangoes contain the three most powerful anti-oxidant vitamins – A, C and E. These vitamins prevent the oxidation of cholesterol, which bears lipoproteins that circulate in the bloodstream.

A 300 gram mango provides 33 per cent of the daily requirement of Vitamin E for an adult male. Mangoes also contain significant amounts of Vitamins B1, B2 and B6. Although lower than carrots in Vitamin A, a mango is the fresh fruit with the greatest Vitamin A content. This nutrient is essential in maintaining healthy epithelial tissues such as skin and the mucosa that lines the body's internal organs.

All foods that cause allergic reactions should be avoided by those who want to maintain healthy skins. An allergic reaction to a specific food or product is only manifested in individuals that are sensitive to it. This is a highly individualised phenomenon. Theoretically, any food, product or substance can cause an allergy to a sensitive person.

Aloe has many uses on the skin. It revitalises skin, giving it better endurance, smoothness and beauty. It is useful for the nails and hair. Though research is still ongoing acemanan, an ingredient in aloe juice, has been scientifically proven to improve the body defence system by improving the functioning of lymphocytes. Sugar, alcohol and spices should be consumed with care. Excess salt causes fluid retention in cells under the skin, thus aggravating cellulitis.