InnerGlow Skin Care

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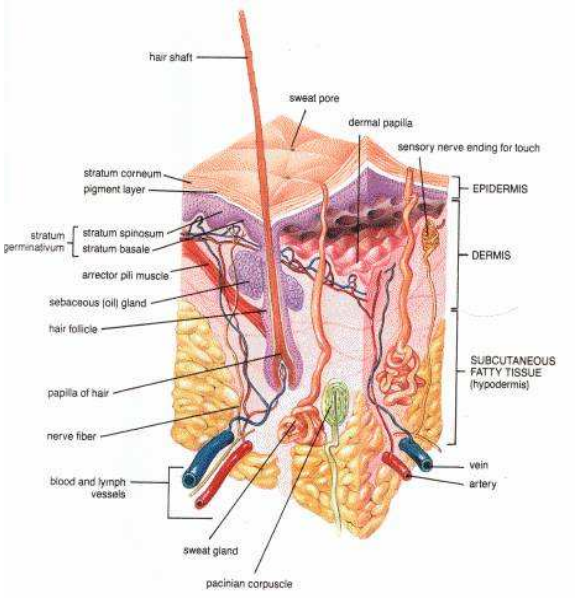
The Physiology of Skin: What Are We Treating In Effective Natural Skin Care?

*We believe that if you understand the anatomy and physiology of the skin, you will not only be more effective in your daily skin care routines, but you will understand how skin is linked to all our major body functions – including immune, respiratory, circulatory, lymph, hormonal and neurotransmitter systems – and how caring for yourself on any one or all of these levels will improve the health of your skin. This is our "holistic" philosophy and why we named our skin care program "**Inner Glow**" –to remind us that beauty is "more than skin deep" and that ideal skin health radiates from the inside out.*

Our skin is our interface with the world and corresponds to our inner processes. It is our largest organ, weighing about 7-10 pounds and covering twenty-one square feet (6.4 square meters). Like our other vital organs, it performs a long list of life-sustaining tasks. It is also the body's mirror: when we're chronically fatigued, poorly nourished, or physically or emotionally stressed, our skin reacts. Premature aging is one consequence of failing to give our skin the care and attention it deserves.



The skin is a highly complex, dynamic tissue system. One square inch of the skin is composed of 19 million cells, 650 sweat glands, 100 sebaceous (oil) glands, 65 hair follicles, 19 000 sensory cells, 4 metres of blood vessels, and 16 meters of nerves, and 165 separate pressure-sensing structures, enabling us to sense pleasure, pain, pressure and hot and cold temperatures. Our skin can store up to 44 pounds of fat and up to 22 pounds of water.

Skin is made up of three main layers: the "Epidermis", the "Dermis", and the "Hypodermis".

The Epidermis

The epidermis is your skin's outer layer and the only layer we can see with our eyes. As we age, remarkable changes occur which are hidden from our view.

The outer surface of the epidermis, called the stratum corneum, is a protective coating of dead skin cells that forms when fresh cells made in the skin's deeper layers push their way to the surface, flatten and die. This layer is thinner than a sheet of tissue paper and is our barrier against dehydration from the environment. It receives its primary supply of moisture from the underlying tissue, since constant contact from the external environment tends to dry

Creams create a waxy barrier to prevent dehydration and keep the skin moist and supple.

Since the life cycle of skin cells within this layer takes about 28 days, it may take three to four weeks to notice significant changes at the skin's surface from using a new moisturizer or cosmetic.

the skin's surface. When the skin is exposed to dry conditions, the cornified layer can become dry, brittle, firm and if untreated, it can crack and lead to infection. Underneath this outermost layer lie six more layers of the epidermis responsible for cell generation.

The stratum corneum is sloughed off continually as new cells take its place. But as we age, this sloughing process slows down. In a young person, cell turnover occurs about every 28-30 days. By the time we're in our sixties, the process takes 45-50 days, which is one of the reasons our skin loses the freshness or "youth" as the years go by. Although the stratum corneum is essentially "dead", it serves an extremely important function: It helps your skin hold in moisture and oil.

This is why exfoliating once or twice per week is so important in your skin care routine. By removing the "dead" skin from the epidermis, moisturizers are more easily absorbed into the deeper layers of the skin.

Basal cells, which produce new skin cells, are at the bottom of the epidermis. The epidermis also contains cells called melanocytes. These cells produce melanin, which determines the colour of your skin. Although we all have about the same number of melanocytes, the actual tone of your skin depends on your skin's unique amount and concentration of melanocytes.

The Dermis

The dermis, which lies under the epidermis and makes up 90% of the thickness of your skin, is where most of the skin's important work is done. The dermis contains nerve receptors, which are sensitive to pressure, temperature, and pain; sweat glands, sebaceous glands (which produce skin protective oil), hair follicles and blood vessels.

The sweat and sebaceous glands in the dermis help produce a thin coating of oil and perspiration that helps effectively protect you from infections. We often unwittingly strip this layer away through the use of harsh soaps, thus disrupting our skin's natural balance of acidity and alkalinity (pH).

The dermis also contains a dense meshwork of ***collagen*** and ***elastin***, two types of proteins that give your skin its strength and elasticity. The stimulation of these proteins is how our therapeutic treatment programs have the effect of increasing youthful tautness and suppleness to the skin.

The Hypodermis

Under the epidermis and dermis is a tissue composed mostly of fat. The fat layer serves to insulate and protect your inner organs and acts as a sort of cushion that helps keep the skin plump and smooth. The hypodermis also contains macrophages, which are immune cells that help keep your skin free from infection, and fibroblasts. Good nutrition is important to minimize inflammation at this layer that could lead to puffiness, acne or psoriasis as well as maintain healthy fibroblasts to reduce the visual effects of the natural loss of fat stores in this layer of skin that can contribute to loose, sagging skin as we age.