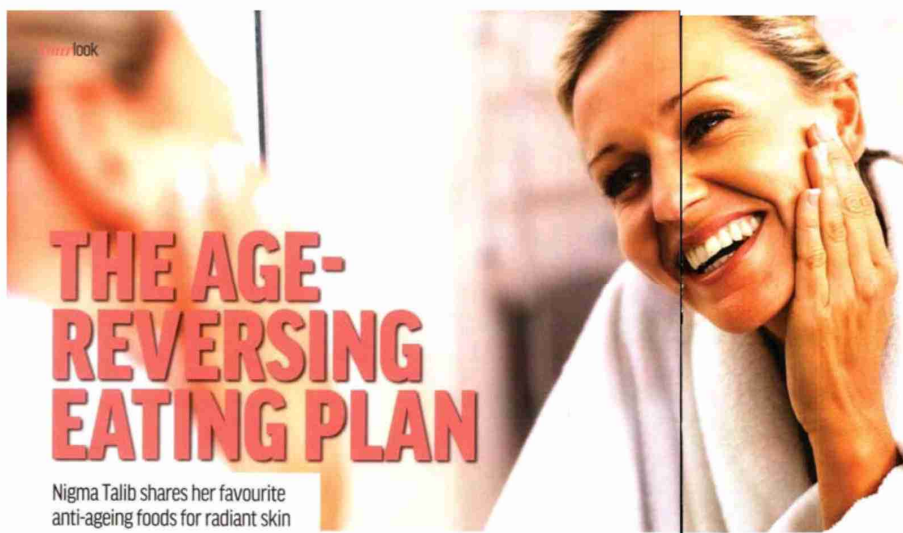


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Nigma Talib shares her favourite anti-ageing foods for radiant skin

Food is your daily medicine – every fruit, vegetable, vitamin, mineral and macronutrient, such as protein, carbohydrate or fat, has a role to play in the health of the body and the ageing ability of the skin.

By choosing foods with the most powerful anti-ageing effects, you can help to ensure that practically every mouthful you eat is turning back time on your body clock.

ANTIOXIDANTS

When you are planning your meals for the day, aim for a good mix of the following anti-ageing families:

GLOW GIVERS

If you want your skin to glow, increase your intake of red, orange and yellow vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, carrots, butternut squash, red peppers and citrus fruit. Researchers at Scotland's University of St Andrews showed that eating two extra servings daily of orange, yellow or red foods, which contain substances called carotenoids, markedly altered skin tone to create a natural healthy glow. It took just six weeks to show effects.

LINE-FIGHTING LEAVES

This means dark green leafy vegetables, such as spinach, kale and watercress: these are an excellent source of magnesium, one of my favourite minerals, and in Japanese studies women with the highest intake of green (and yellow) vegetables in their diet also had the youngest-looking skin – particularly around the eyes. It's believed the fact that they help your skin create its own natural SPF is behind the effect. Watercress gets its own special mention here as when experts at William Paterson University in New Jersey ranked 41 vegetables for nutrient potential, watercress came out on top –



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that's right, even above kale!

DIRTY HORMONE FIXERS

These include the cruciferous vegetables, such as cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and broccoli. Amazing detoxifiers, these help boost the health of your liver and are particularly important for balancing hormones. Other excellent detoxifiers include onions and leeks, which supply the sulphur the liver needs to process toxins out of the system.

BACTERIA-BOOSTING PREBIOTICS

These help feed the good bacteria in the gut. As well as onions and leeks, this group includes Jerusalem artichokes, dandelion leaves, asparagus, chicory and bananas. In one study, simply adding these foods alone to people's diets raised levels of their good bacteria numbers by 133 million in a week.

POWER-PACKED BERRIES

Berries are one of the best fruits to eat as their slight natural bitterness means they have a lower GI than many fruits. Many people reach for blueberries for anti-ageing, but red berries contain a magic ingredient called ellagic acid, a polyphenol that's been shown to counteract the damage UV light does to skin, triggering wrinkle formation. It actually stops the release of collagen-destroying MMP (matrix metalloproteinase) that normally occurs when UV hits the skin.

GUT-FRIENDLY GRAINS

Eat a fist-size serving at most meals. I've said before how surprised my patients are when I tell them that they absolutely must eat carbohydrates because wholegrains are an incredible source of antioxidants. They also contain so many of the nutrients that you need to fight 'inflamm-ageing', such as the B vitamins or magnesium. Good gluten-free grains include all of the following ingredients (don't forget you can also include products made from these, such as breads, noodles, cereals and wraps):

- Amaranth
- Buckwheat

- Quinoa
- Rice
- Teff

POWER PROTEINS

Eat a portion at every meal. Protein is the building block of beauty. It's the substance from which skin, hair and nails are formed and without adequate levels all of these three things will suffer. All forms of protein are great for skin, but the ones I think that have skin superpowers include:

- Bone broth
- Eggs
- Oily fish
- Poultry
- Pulses/legumes
- Red meat
- Soy

BEAUTY OILS AND SUPER SEEDS

These foods contain the healthy fats that your skin needs for proper hydration. We have got used to eating low-fat foods and are now almost a bit scared of adding any fat, even the healthiest ones to our meals. If, however, you increase levels of the right fats - the unsaturated fats, omega-3 oils and coconut oil - you will notice your skin looks plumper, lines and wrinkles start to fade and your skin simply takes on a

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healthier, more youthful look. Adding fats to a meal also helps to keep you full and feeling satisfied afterwards. Aim to add a small serving to most, if not all, your meals. Here are some of my favourite sources:

- Avocado
- Algae
- Chia seeds
- Flaxseed and flaxseed oil
- Nuts and nut butters
- Olives and olive oil
- Coconut oil



Extracted from *Reverse the Signs of Ageing* by **Nigma Talib** (£12.99, Vermilion). Photography by Patrick Marks

