

THE BEAUTY EXPERT

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# DO VEGANS HAVE BETTER SKIN?

That glow in their cheeks isn't all due to self-righteousness and kale salads. **By Meirav Devash**

How do you know someone is a vegan? Don't worry, they'll tell you. That's the old joke, of course. As it turns out, even if they don't announce it, their clear, luminous skin might. For a long time, dermatologists struggled to prove what their vegan patients suspected and science is finally catching on to. "The rates of hormonal acne I see have gone up so much," says Miami dermatologist S. Manjula Jegasothy. "It's all coming from the hormones that the animals we eat are being fed or injected with." Non-organic hamburgers and chicken can cause hormone imbalances that really get the oil glands going, which means breakouts and the massive cystic honkers that everyone hates.

Sure, some vegans live on French fries and Oreos (yup, they're vegan), but those are outliers. Generally, vegans eat more fresh produce—you know, those colorful foods dug from the ground or plucked from a tree, not taken out of a box—than someone on the average Western diet. Unsurprisingly, eating vitamin-packed fruits and vegetables staves off blemishes better than anything you'd order from your car. One recent study found that diets high in carotenoid pigments (think red, orange, yellow) from produce give Caucasian women's skin an appealing yellow tint that makes it appear healthier and more attractive.

But the vegetables aren't all that vegans are getting right. Dairy is particularly scary for skin, dermatologists say. "For a lactating cow to give its baby what it needs to grow, that milk is going to be very high in hormones," says Jegasothy. Dermatologist William Danby even called cow's milk "nature's perfect food for the creation of acne." If you have trouble with breakouts, you have our permission to put milk on your shit list.

Need more proof? Researchers studying indigenous populations in Papua New Guinea and Paraguay—people who eat traditional unprocessed, low-fat, plant-based diets—have discovered entire communities without a single pimple among them. Not one. In case you're not convinced. (We are.)

## The Foods That (Really) Cause Acne

### HAMBURGERS

Some believe that low-grade red meat is very acidic (leading to inflammation), packed with growth hormones (zits), and spiked with antibiotics (just no).

### CHICKEN FINGERS

Though chickens are not given any hormones (the FDA and USDA prohibit it), they produce plenty on their own that are terrible for human skin.

### ICE CREAM

It's sky-high in zit-summoning sugar and dairy. WTF you thinking?

