

HEALTH

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TCM: Forever young

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Although we can't avoid getting older, traditional Chinese medicine's holistic approach to health and well-being aims to maintain the body and prevent premature ageing.

Keeping the skin young with TCM involves replenishing blood and activating its circulation and nourishing *yin* for lubrication.

The spleen provides the source of blood and *qi* (vital energy), and the lungs are responsible for disseminating the blood and *qi* to the skin. These two organs ensure that the skin is constantly nourished.

A sluggish metabolic rate will inevitably lead to malnourished skin, causing dullness, wrinkles, age spots, dryness, hair loss and brittle and deformed nails.

Texture and elasticity of skin can be improved with herbal remedies, food supplements and external therapies such as massage or acupuncture.

A simple remedy to help brighten the skin involves dried tangerine peel (30g), water melon kernel (50g) and peach blossom

(40g). Grind into a powder mixture and take three times a day, two grams each time.

Foods recommended for skin health are white fungus, lily buds, wolfberry fruits, red dates (right), bird's nest, sea cucumber, oysters, conch, pig skin, animal bone marrow and pond loach.

These foods are believed to nourish *yin* and promote blood production. Dried persimmon fruit once or twice a day is also said to keep the skin glowing.

Fresh cucumber and garlic seasoned with soybean sauce, sesame oil and red pepper may also help maintain the skin.

TCM external therapies to improve blood circulation and lubricate the body use creams, jellies, lotions, masks, and powder. Common ingredients include pearl powder, notoginseng, motherwort herb, almond and ginseng.

Prepare 100g of almonds by soaking them in warm water and removing the skins. Grind into a cream and mix with one egg white. Apply to the face, leave overnight

and in the morning clean with rice water. This helps remove brown spots, acne and fine wrinkles.

Acupoints are areas on the body for regulating the function of organs and meridians, which naturally enhance the skin's circulation. Stimulating them will promote good skin health.

After waking, use the hands to rub the ears and pull them slightly, then massage the scalp and comb the hair with the fingers. Rub hands together to heat them up and sweep from the forehead down to the chin 14 times.

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Before taking any medicine, consult your TCM or medical practitioner