

The Summer Of Beauty

by Kayla Fioravanti

Summer is my favorite season of the year; the season that beauty comes naturally. When I was a child we spent our summer vacations in Italy. I learned lessons of beauty from some of the world's most exotic women. Italian women love the sun and being outdoors. Exercise is an innate part of life. They eat wholeheartedly, and drink plenty of water. Mostly, I think Italian women felt beautiful therefore they radiated confidence.

In America, our image of beauty has warped over the years. I hear gorgeous women tell me that they feel ugly and judge themselves harshly. Combinations of low self-image, society's outrageous standards and occasionally their own family dynamics have convinced them that they fall short of beautiful. Women should never let anyone, or their self-image, tell them they are less than beautiful.

I say we should listen to our children. In my lowest beauty moments, after being up all night with sick children, they will gaze up lovingly at me and tell me, "Mom, you are so beautiful."

Go Outside and Play

Italian women taught me a love for the sun, but never in excess. Lounging on the beach protected by SPF lotions or oils, having a natural olive tone, their skin was never exceedingly dark. The sun is vital to your health and well being along with almost every living thing on earth. Skin uses this energy from the sun to produce vitamin D for your body. Vitamin D is known to strengthen your immune system functions.

Enjoy the sun, but don't over indulge, because it is a love-hate relationship. Wrinkles and acne are related to inflammation. Excessive sun exposure increases your skin's inflammation, enables the risk for cancer, and assists premature aging. I had a neighbor that looked at least seventy years old, yet to my surprise, she was still in her late forties. She was outside every day roasting her skin like an old dried out raisin. The only raisins in your house should be in your cereal.

Protect your skin. Slather yourself and your kids with a good SPF lotion. Be sure to keep your eye out for the new natural sunscreens that will be hitting the market this summer with ingredients like Zinc Oxide and Titanium Dioxide.

Get Moving

Women in Italy walked and rode their bicycles every day. In America, walking to the market is not always possible, with the demands of the modern family. A simple walk after dinner with the family is a great way to get exercise. As my Dad always said, "A family that walks together stays together." Of course we always rolled our eyes, because he said that about every thing we did as a family.

Everyone should wear deodorant, because no one wants to be offensive, but never wear antiperspirant. I cannot count how many women have told me, after learning they had breast cancer; their doctors advised them to stop using antiperspirant.

When you do exercise allow yourself to sweat freely. Take advantage of your bodies detoxifying and regulating system. Your body uses sweat to carry toxins through your skin. When you suppress your bodies need to expel toxins you leave them gathered under your arm and around your delicate breast tissue. Normal lymphatic drainage is critical to your overall health. Your skin is a living breathing organ, never smother it in any chemicals that suppress its natural functions.

Mangia, Mangia (Eat)

It shocked me to watch Italian women eat. They ate huge meals, were fit as a fiddle, and their skin was beautiful. Everything they ate was freshly prepared from whole foods. They did not eat

fast food, boxed or preserved, or genetically modified foods despite convenience.

Enjoy and utilize the bounty of summer; there are so many vegetables and fruit for every season. Summer crops are packed with antioxidants; as an anti-inflammatory for your body. What you eat can actually enhance your skin from the inside out and internally protect against the effects of the season like wrinkles, sags and sunburn.

A tomato, which contains the antioxidant lycopene, fortifies the skin against sun damage. According to Dr. Nicholas Perricone, M.D., eight to twelve ounces of fish per day are part of a "nutritional face lift". Carrots, squash and sweet potatoes, broccoli, spinach and kale are rich in Vitamin A, which is important for growth, development and maintenance of healthy skin. Berries, tomatoes, grapes, citrus fruits, kiwi, cantaloupe and melons contain antioxidants that help fight free radicals from your body.

And for goodness sake, make sure you are getting organic foods. The produce that is processed, nitrated and full of pesticides may be prettier to look at but they are definitely not better for you. Keep in mind your skin is a vehicle to expel the toxins in foods you eat. If you want your skin to radiate, put only whole and organic foods into your body whenever possible.

Drink Water

I am certain you have heard this a dozen times or more, but I will have to add my voice to the chorus: drink plenty of water! Your skin will radiate from the healthy intake. A good rule of thumb is to drink eight of eight, that is, eight servings of eight ounces of water per day. By the time you feel thirsty your body is already experiencing the first stages of dehydration. Adequate water intake promotes your body's natural healing process. Misting your face in the summer for external skin hydration gives your skin a healthy boost against aging, arid climates, air conditioning and dehydration. Remember, while the sun and air are our friends, they can be very damaging on our skin. All precautions to remain friends are advised.

Get Dirty

As a Cosmetic Formulator, I have studied and understand the function of germs in our world beyond most individuals. From those studies I have discovered a well kept secret: it is good to get dirty, very good. Your skin actually benefits from microbes that naturally exist in dirt. Between the use of pesticides, herbicides and antibiotic disinfectants; we have over-sterilized our world. Have you ever wondered why clay masks are so good for your skin? Clay is just glorified dirt, full of minerals and vitamins that pull toxins from your body. Clay and dirt reconnects our bodies with the earth's soil.

Go out and play in the dirt with your kids. It is good for all of you. Your body naturally develops antibodies to the germs that it is in contact with. Small doses help build your body's immune system, where products like chemical laden hand sanitizers, break down your natural immune system. So get dirty and just wash up with simple hot water and soap.

My advice is to utilize all the benefits that summer offers and carry it through your entire life.

Play. Eat. Exercise. Hydrate. Radiate Beauty. Feel Beautiful. Be Beautiful.

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