



THE INSIDE OUT

The new evolution of supplementation

It was only a matter of time before our collective craving for convenience would be satiated by the health-food and beauty industries, as evidenced by health-based “functional foods” and beauty aids, of which consumer interest in which continues to increase. Both revolutions have only encouraged manufacturers of quick-to-consume products to flood the market with their goods, which reportedly have health benefits beyond nutrition that help one beautify from the inside out. With the emergence of this trend comes skepticism. Are things such as beauty drinks and dietary supplements geared toward “elite” and “high-performance” athletes the real deal, or just real convincing gimmicks? We consulted an expert affiliated with one of the aforementioned products, and another savvy Atlanta nutritionist, for the skinny.

The case for “functional foods”

According to the International Food Information Council, “Functional foods include a variety of foods and food components believed to improve overall health and well-being, reduce the risk of specific diseases or minimize the effects of other health concerns.” Findings from the council’s 2007 research study, Consumer Attitudes Toward Functional Foods/Foods for Health, held that among consumers’ top functional foods are fish oil, whole grains, green tea, herbs/spices, nuts and juice—standard choices as far as health food is concerned. Where, then, do trendy nutritional and dietary supplements (something taken orally that provides the body with extra nutrients) fit in?

A word about supplementation

Blair Giles, MS, RD, LD, Nutritionist and owner of Atlanta Dietitian says that ideally, nutrients should come from foods, but she also says it isn’t always possible. “There is definitely a place for supplements in certain individuals and populations,” she explains. “For example, people with iron-deficiency anemia need iron supplementation, and pregnant women should take a prenatal supplement to provide enough folate to prevent birth defects. Additionally, taking a multivitamin is good insurance for most people who are not sure if they are getting adequate nutrients from their diet.” However effective the method, she warns, it is important—even crucial—for people not to rely on supplements to provide the bulk of their nutrients. Anthony Almada, MSc, president and chief officer of GENR8, agrees. “Food is nutrition and dietary supplements do just that—supplement food,” he says.

So, do so-called “tonic waters,” antioxidant cocktails, edible beauty products and high-performance supplements represent the modern-day fountain of youth, or simply slick marketing campaigns that capitalize on the public’s phobia of aging? It’s a tough question that doesn’t yield a definitive answer, especially with regard to beauty drinks. Because “beauty” is subjective, Giles says the effectiveness of these liquid remedies is difficult to quantify. Magic potions or not, beauty elixirs continue to make a popular market showing with consumers. Here’s a closer look at a few of the more popular “cosmeceutical beverages,” beauty accessories and athletic supplements that affect how you look and feel.

Craze or crazy... You decide

Product: Borba Skin Balance Water

According to Borba’s Web site, this advancement in hydrotherapy is “drinkable skincare” said to help “preserve and protect the astonishing natural wonder that is your skin.” By blending vitamins (E, B6 and B12), botanicals and minerals, Borba claims age-defying properties that help firm and hydrate the skin, giving users a more youthful appearance. borba.com

Product: Yagua Beauty Juicer

With a formulation that blends grapefruit, ginger and white cocoa, and is infused with collagen, aloe vera and vitamins, the Dutch manufacturer of this product offers a variety of natural “skin juicers,” including purity teas said to turn back the clock. yagua.nl/

Product: Enviga

This tasty green-tea calorie-burner is available in three tropical flavors, making it an ice-cold refresher rich in anti-oxidants, all developed from scientific research. The makers of the beverage claim that, “Every can of Enviga has more EGCG (green tea extract) than any other ready-to-drink tea and provides 20 percent of the daily value of calcium.” enviga.com

Product: Beauty Scoop

Benefits of this “natural and vegetable-based” product, reportedly created from scientific research, include reducing “the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles,” increasing hydration and improving vitality of the skin, and even improving lackluster locks and brittle nails. Beauty Scoop contains a mixture of vitamins, minerals and peptides (amino acids). beautyscoop.com

By Jennifer Thornton