

# Anti-Aging from the Inside Out

By Christie Winkelman

Want to age gracefully, but aren't sure what steps to take? As we get older the body goes through many changes; some we welcome, some we don't! Fortunately there are many ways to keep the body feeling and looking young naturally. As naturopathic physicians, we specialize in creating radiant health for our patients. One of the byproducts of health, along with high energy, good sleep quality, balanced moods and hormones, and optimal weight, is looking young for your age.

One major contributor to aging is hormonal balance. Hormones are responsible for almost every aspect of how our bodies function on a daily basis. Ensuring that they are balanced is essential to feeling young and healthy.

Cortisol, aka the "stress hormone," is the primary hormone responsible for your daily energy. It wakes us up in the morning feeling rested and refreshed. If we find ourselves wanting more sleep upon waking, or in an energy slump at 2-3 pm, cortisol is likely out of balance. Most people who are tired reach for that extra cup of coffee or sugary food, which in turn, drains our bodies of even more cortisol, causing the cycle to repeat. One way to start addressing this is to keep sleep and mealtimes consistent daily; nutritional and botanical therapies are also powerful in this arena.


In contrast, growth hormone is the opposite of cortisol, and is highest during sleep. It is needed for cellular (read skin!) repair and nightly detoxification of the body. High-quality, deep sleep every night is the answer! A good rule is to try to be in bed by 10 pm, as every hour of sleep before midnight is worth twice every hour after midnight. If you have insomnia, night waking or find yourself easily awoken from sleep, your cortisol and growth hormone levels may need rebalancing.

The sex hormones such as estrogen, testosterone and progesterone are a crucial part of the aging process. As we age the sex hormones decrease in production during menopause (women) and andropause (men), putting pressure on the adrenal glands, which make cortisol. If cortisol is out of balance before entering menopause or andropause, hot flashes, weight gain and libido changes may make an appearance. A high-quality daily B-complex vitamin is a start to providing better energy and balanced hormones. Saliva testing is the gold standard and is often indispensable to sorting out the puzzle of hormonal symptoms.

Another aspect of feeling young is skin, hair and nail health. Adding good fats to the diet is essential to the vitality of these tissues. We hear quite a bit about essential fatty acids (EFAs), but what exactly do they do? EFAs help support every tissue in the body by balancing inflammation in cells. This balance allows cells to repair, promoting strong hair and nails and younger, healthier looking skin. Iron and thyroid balance and certain

nutrient deficiencies are also factors we consider with hair loss or prematurely aging skin.

Antioxidants are peerless; increase your color variety of fresh fruits and vegetables – not only for anti-aging effects, but for cancer prevention, as well. Eat the rainbow each day!

The recommendations in this article should be discussed with your doctor. A visit with a naturopathic physician will yield an individualized care plan to meet your specific health goals – so you can live your best life. 



Dr. Christie Winkelman is the owner and director of Insights to Health Clinic in Multnomah Village (InsightsND.com), a four-doctor family naturopathic and neurofeedback clinic specializing in sustainable weight loss, chronic pain, depression, anxiety, insomnia, ADHD, fertility and hormone balancing. She and her husband, Gil, are members of Congregation Neveh Shalom, and their children attend Portland Jewish Academy.

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