

Easy to Swallow

By Andrea Renskoff

Skincare manufacturers' nutritional supplements can feed clients' skin while doing wonders for your retail revenue.

“USING ONLY TOPICAL SKINCARE IS AN IDEA OF THE PAST.

If you want to look at the future, you really have to have supplements,” says Dr. Howard Murad, whose Internal Skincare Supplements are a thriving part of his Murad skincare line. “I recommend an inclusive approach using treatments, topicals and nutrition, and the best place

to get all three should be at the spa and nowhere else.” As spa professionals seek to help clients with total wellness, adding nutritional supplements to their retail shelves can provide both a strengthened revenue stream and a valuable service.





The old saying holds true: We are what we eat. Perhaps even more significantly, we are what we are because of what we neglect to eat. With the USDA recommending five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables a day, it's no surprise to learn that most Americans fall well short of the mark, and many skin conditions are symptoms of problems caused by nutritional deficiencies. Lacking the vitamins, minerals, fats and trace elements that healthy foods provide, people are increasingly turning to supplements to make up the difference. In addition, massive research has led to supplement formulations that help replace chemicals the body produces naturally, but which diminish with age, directly affecting the skin. Specialized supplements can have a true impact on antiaging, increasing hydration and reducing the appearance of wrinkles, as well as addressing problems such as acne, rosacea and sun damage.

Fear Factor

With health food stores, gourmet markets, vitamin stores, pharmacies and discount retailers offering a dizzying array of supplements, spa owners must seek to carry only those supplements serving their particular purposes—so choose with care. “You can’t just offer some new ingredient from South Africa that hasn’t been tested,” says Murad. “Your clients will, and should, ask themselves, ‘Why am I taking this?’”

Spa professionals must be prepared to answer that question, but it's not always so simple. “People can go absolutely nuts figuring out what to take,” says Jan Marini, president of Jan Marini Skin Research, whose C-ESTAMINS supplement is a respected part of the company's skincare product line. “Can you imagine having cancer, walking into a pharmacy and being told to pick out your own medicine? Spas have to look at themselves as a consultative resource for skincare clients. You

have to act as a clearing house for the client.”

However, some spa professionals are intimidated by this prospect. “We’ve found that spa owners and estheticians think that supplements are more complicated than they are,” says Kasandra Beck, executive vice president for TriElements. “But think about it—at health food stores, consumers usually read the labels and pick out things for themselves.”

Still, a little bit of education goes a long way, and skincare professionals should step up to the plate. “When it comes to supplements, most doctors don’t know any more than estheticians do,” points out Marini. “They don’t learn about it in medical school. There’s no board certification for doctors in terms of vitamins.”

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Murad thinks there's a fear factor about providing supplements because they're taken internally, but he says this doesn't mean they can't be safe. As with any product, they should come with precautions for use. “On the package, we say that

if you're pregnant, nursing, under the direction of a physician or taking medications, you should consult your physician before using," Murad says. "We know there isn't anything in our products that couldn't be found elsewhere. What's unique are our combinations."

From the Inside Out

How does a nutritional supplement work on skin? To explain this to clients, spa professionals must understand it themselves. Skincare experts are more than willing to offer explanations.

"Supplements don't work directly to diminish symptoms; they work cooperatively with the body to help it perform a function it should be performing itself, so it can heal whatever condition is causing the problem," explains Beck. "The FDA doesn't even allow supplement manufacturers to claim that their products 'treat, cure or prevent' a disease."



Dr. Linda T. Nelson, a doctor of naturopathy and founder of The M'lis Company, has based her entire company's philosophy on the idea that the body must heal itself from the inside out. M'lis' commitment to a holistic philosophy is punctuated by the 16 supplements in its product line. M'lis has divided its product offerings into treatment programs to address various physical conditions, including hormonal imbalances and acne. The acne program consists of a detoxification kit, calcium, daily multivitamin, evening primrose oil, organic flax seed oil and the VITAL antioxidant. This combination of supplements is meant to detoxify the system, thus relieving the skin of the job of throwing off accumulated toxins, as well as provide essential fatty acids for healing and nutrients to strengthen organs and tissues.

"What makes us age are free radicals," says Dr. John P. Mamana, co-founder of Clinician's Choice, maker of a range of supplement formulas. "We produce billions of free radicals each day and that's

Redness Reducer

A new study, published in a recent issue of *Skin Pharmacology and Physiology*, points to the effectiveness of a grape seed extract supplement in reducing UV-induced redness. Researchers from Bioskin GmbH in Hamburg, Germany, recruited 42 subjects and randomly assigned half to take 100 mg per day of Anthogenol, the *Vitis vinifera* grape seed extract. The supplemented group showed higher skin hydration levels and 13% less redness than the nonsupplemented group.

what causes degeneration of the skin and joints." Mamana reports that 30 medical experts worked together to create the Clinician's Choice Super Antioxidant Plus formulation aimed at neutralizing those free radicals.

Another skin aging culprit is insufficient fat intake. "We're on lower-fat diets and, as a result, skin is drier, making our wrinkles more prominent," says Mamana. "We need more healthy fats to counteract the dryness. Supplements that contain fatty fish oils, such as Clinician's Choice Premium Omega-3, are intended to restore much-needed fats." AcquaCures has developed its Omega Within supplement to work hand in hand with its topical skincare products under the heading of The Omega



3 Lipid-Rich Matrix System. The supplement's marine lipid concentrate is formulated to provide the essential fatty acids necessary for skin health, and that may even be a weapon against conditions such as eczema and psoriasis.

"The common denominator in aging is loss of connective tissue," states Marini. "That's what makes the body 'fluffy.'" The body's natural production of the water-filled gel called hyaluronic acid (HA) slows with age. Recent development of an ingestible HA, called BioCell Collagen II, led

continued on page 72 ►



Marini to reformulate her C-ESTAMINS to include this key ingredient. Marini uses the full therapeutic dose of 2,000 mg of BioCell II in her product, along with co-enzyme Q10 to reduce the appearance of wrinkles, alpha lipoic acid, vitamins A, B, C and E, and minerals offering skincare benefits. “Applying something topically can make an impact on how skin looks; supplements can affect how skin functions,” she says.

Many skin problems show marked improvement with the use of supplements. Murad’s Pure Skin Dietary Supplement helps support clear complexions with vitamin A, yellow dock, burdock and zinc, combined with a host of other vitamins, minerals and botanicals. The company’s Wet Suit Cell Hydrating Dietary Supplement is formulated

products are formulated to rebalance the system, counteract deficiencies and repair damage. Thalgo’s OceaLift supplements contain natural vitamin C, fish oil, borage oil and beta carotene to counteract skin aging. “Nutrition is a specialized department at Thalgo,” says Reiss-Depp. “Used along with treatments, they provide a synergistic effect.”

Supplements can work synergistically with a variety of services. “Our Time Perfection and Prime Renewal supplements go hand in hand with any topical treatments or creams, but now several dermatologists are stocking the products for use before Botox treatments and face lifts,” notes Connie Petticrew, U.S. country manager for Imedeen. The supplements contain the company’s proprietary blends of Biomarine Complex and Lycopence GS,

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to help lock moisture into the skin with the use of essential fatty acids. And Murad’s Pomphenol Sunguard boosts the effectiveness of SPF in sunscreen with its derivative of pomegranates.

TriElements uses descriptive titles for its products, boxed in paired combinations to enable consumers to make a customized selection of two supplements, depending on their particular skincare focuses: cleansing, nourishing and antiaging. Individual supplements include Healthy Aging Multiple with vitamins and minerals; TriJuvenate with antioxidants and HA; and MacroMicro Cleanse made with detoxifying herbs and botanicals.

A day spa is often the best place for people to learn and discuss all of the factors that affect their skin and, therefore, a logical place to purchase appropriate supplements. “Clients are often most comfortable talking about their skin with their regular esthetician,” says Dar Reiss-Depp, president of distributorship for Thalgo, whose sea-derived

along with vitamin C to help improve skin elasticity and texture. The GlyMed Plus Body Smart six-product supplement line includes Physician Elite Rx Pre and Post, specifically formulated to skin subjected to trauma, such as surgical procedures, and Cell Science Cleanse & Replenish, based on ayurvedic science that can be an adjunct to ayurveda treatments.

A Natural for Selling

How do you incorporate nutritional skincare supplements into your mainstream retailing efforts? It starts with making sure you know your clients’ supplement needs. “Our spa clients fill out a skin analysis chart,” says Shiri Sarfati, director of communications for Repêchage. “We want to know what skin care they’re using but also what they’re eating every day and how much coffee they’re drinking. We review that information with the client and come up with an at-home program. It’s a great way to initiate a

Skincare Supplement Sources

AcquaCures, 831/636-2088, www.acquacures.com
Avancé, 800/777-SKIN, www.avanceskincare.com
Beauty Attica/Dr. Jeff Skin Care, 888/316-3683, www.dr-jeff.com
Caudalie, 866/826-1615, www.caudalie-usa.com
Clinician's Choice, 800/640-6642, www.clinicians-choice.com
Dr. Grandel, 800/543-5230, www.grandelusa.com
Elementals Health and Wellness System, 877/214-4674, www.elementalshealth.com
Elon Essentials, 800/414-3566, www.elonessentials.com
Glymed, 800/676-9667, www.glymedplus.com
Imedeen (developed and manufactured by Ferrosan), 800/870-7195, www.imedeen.us
Jan Marini Skin Research, 800/347-2223, www.janmarini.com
Kinerase, 800/321-4576, www.kinerase.com
M'lis, 800/548-0569, www.mliscountry.com
Mountain View/TriElements, 888/876-3240, www.trielements.com
Murad, 800/242-1103, www.murad.com
Omni Nature, 908/852-7088, www.omninnature.com
Repêchage, 800/248-7546, www.repechage.com
SpaGen, 858/546-2895, www.spagen.com
Thalgo, 972/771-0300, www.thalgo.com
VitaMedica, 888/367-8605, www.vitamedica.com

conversation about supplements.” Repêchage’s Vita Cura supplement calls upon protein-rich seaweed and spirulina to help fortify the body against the environmental and stress factors that affect skin.

Although it generally takes at least 30 days of continual use to reap the benefits from supplements, Repêchage recommends giving clients a sample dosage before they receive their in-spa skin treatments. “It introduces the product,” says Sarfati. “Our spa presents the supplements on a silver tray with some water and a few healthful almonds. We discuss the benefits and clients usually walk out with a purchase.”

Supplement recommendations can come from various sources at your spa. “Our hairstylists might recommend them for thinning hair, or the manicurist might suggest them to strengthen nails and prevent breakage,” says Sarfati. “That links the wellness

atmosphere to every part of the spa and salon.”

The revenue-building advantages of selling supplements are numerous. First, supplements are often packaged in a 30-day supply, which brings back the client every month, potentially leading to a continuous profit source. “When someone sees the benefits and they come back to get more supplements, that’s also a great time to book an appointment or invite them in for a special,” points out Sarfati.

Second, supplements can be packaged with in-spa treatments. “You can offer a standard treatment program and a treatment program ‘plus’ that includes a topical and a month’s supply of skincare supplements,” suggests Beck. “People will almost always go for the better package.”

Third, like a healthy diet, supplements must be used every day for continued results. “Our bodies have to have the help every day, just like we have to eat every day and we have to drink every day,” says Reiss-Depp. “If someone stops using the supplements, their free radicals will eventually overtake the benefits.”

“It can bring progressive income,” affirms Marini. “We work with some plastic surgeons who use a supplement continuity plan in which they automatically send supplements to patients every month. Some people are making more money with this in total than they are from providing procedures.”

With the MSRP (manufacturer’s suggested retail price) for supplements usually at a 100% markup, the question of whether to sell might best be replaced by the tougher question of which ones to sell.

No Bitter Pills

Choosing a supplement or supplement line for your retail department is no different from choosing any other retail product in that you need to consider compatibility with your current skincare lines, your spa’s therapeutic philosophy and approach, and



[Easy to Swallow]



of course, your clients' needs. With so many supplements on the market, the client needs to know that the spa owner or esthetician is helping her make a discerning choice. "While it's very rare for a supplement to do any harm, there are definitely different levels of effectiveness," says Beck.

"Advanced delivery and optimal dosing of the best ingredients available are the keys," says Ange Trahern, spokesperson for Valeant Pharmaceuticals, manufacturer of Kinerase Multi-Vitamins, Minerals and Nutrients. The company's Dietary Supplement for Beautiful Skin and Wellness is packaged with individual packets of pills and capsules for morning and evening use, helping take the guesswork out of dosing.

How can you judge quality? Some ways are obvious. "Buy a \$7 bottle of omega fatty acids and it will smell like fish," says Mamana. "Ingest the supplement and you'll get a fish burp that will last for a day."

DAYSPA would like to thank the following companies for sending supplements for photography:

- AquaCures
- Caudalie
- Clinican's Choice
- Imedeen
- Jan Marini
- Kinerase
- Mountain View/TriElements
- Murad
- Repêchage
- Thalgo

Sarfati says to look for natural isomers. "They enable the body to better metabolize and absorb the ingredients," she says. "And there should be no preservatives, additives, yeast or dairy products."

A quality supplement provider will work closely with spa owners and estheticians to help them store and display the products properly. Supplements generally need no refrigeration but should always be stored and shelved in cool, dry places, and should have an expiration date printed on them (typically two to three years from manufacturing). Displays should include some consumer education material. TriElements provides plastic display trays for its supplements along with literature trays to hold their colorful, consumer-friendly brochures.

Offering supplements isn't labor intensive or space consuming, and can add another facet to a spa's mission. "Let your customer know that there are four steps to their beauty routine: cleanse, tone, moisturize and supplement," says Petticrew. And for those who worry about bridging into selling supplements, Marini has some strong advice: "Come up with something simple and direct to say to clients about supplements. Say it confidently. And say it to everyone, every day." ●

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