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10 Ways Your Face Reveals Health Problems

by PAIGE BRETTINGEN | Last Updated: Jun 05, 2017



Waking up to pimples speckling your face isn't how anyone wants to start the day. And while it's tempting to grab the medicated soap as a quick fix, it may be worth getting a second opinion. What if those pimples are a sign of a deeper health issue — a food sensitivity, for example, or a deficiency in vitamin A, zinc or omega-3s? Here is a list of common beauty blunders that could be caused by an underlying health issue. We also include integrative approaches for fixing the root of the problem.

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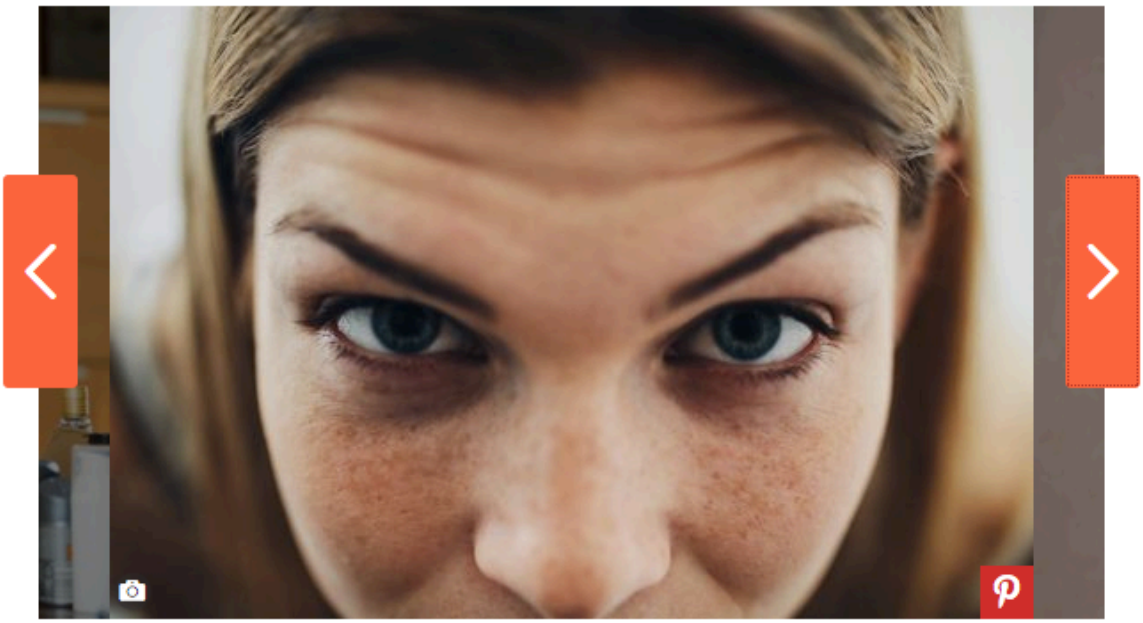


1 UNWANTED FACIAL HAIR

For women, unwanted facial hair could be sign of a hormonal imbalance resulting from an overproduction of androgens, the hormones made by the gonads and adrenal glands. Or it could be a sign of polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), particularly when accompanied by irregular or missing menstrual cycles. Before booking your next appointment to be waxed, see a doctor who knows how to balance hormones naturally, suggests Dr. Trevor Cates, N.D., the first licensed female naturopathic doctor in California and author of "Clean Skin From Within." Additionally, herbal supplements like chasteberry and saw palmetto could also help counteract excess androgens, she says.

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3 DARK UNDER-EYE CIRCLES

Lack of sleep shouldn't get the full blame for those dark circles under your eyes. Also called "allergic shiners," dark eye circles are often an indication that you're eating foods your body finds toxic, says Dr. Cates. "Try cutting out the most common food allergens, such as dairy, gluten and eggs, for 10 days to see if these diminish," she suggests. If that proves unsuccessful, she recommends having allergy tests done to see if environmental sensitivities like mold, pet dander or pollen could be causing your under-eye reactions.

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4 PATCHES OF TINY PIMPLES

Patches of white or red bumps can easily be mistaken for tiny pimples and treated as such. But they're actually known as keratosis pilaris, a skin condition that occurs when you're not getting enough essential fatty acids, zinc and/or vitamin A, says Dr. Cates. "To help your skin maintain a healthy oil barrier, be sure to consume essential fatty acids like omega-3 from wild salmon. And add in some pumpkin seeds, flaxseed, grass-fed beef and kidney beans to boost your intake of zinc. Vitamin A-rich foods include sweet potatoes and dark green leafy vegetables," she says. Note that these bumps also tend to pop up on the backs of arms, the buttocks and the thighs.

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6 BLISTERS AT THE CORNERS OF THE MOUTH

If cracks and blisters seem to be permanent fixtures on the corners of your mouth, it's another dietary concern. According to Dr. Cates, any cracking, blistering or crusting in this area is a sign of iron and vitamin B deficiencies, especially B-2 and B-12. Not to panic: It's both common and simple to correct, necessitating a boost in iron- and vitamin B-rich foods, such as dark green leafy vegetables, beans, free-range chicken and grass-fed beef, she says. Furthermore, to ensure your body gets the maximum absorption of iron and vitamin B from these "said comestibles", pair them with fiber-rich legumes and vegetables or enzyme-containing foods like papaya.

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7 THIN EYEBROWS

If your eyebrows — especially the outer third sections — are thinning more and more, it could be a sign of an underactive thyroid, says Dr. Cates, meaning your hormone levels are imbalanced. A few other signs of an underactive thyroid include dry skin, weight gain, constipation or fatigue. Speak with a doctor about having thyroid tests done. If it's deemed underactive, work with a professional who can provide individualized support for hormone balance, says Dr. Cates.

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8 PALE SKIN

Though you've always been quick to credit your Irish heritage for your pale skin, it might be worth double-checking if that's actually the reason. Another potential reason? Anemia, which is caused by a vitamin B-12, B-6, folate and/or iron deficiency, says Dr. Cates. "This is more common in people eating a vegan diet or who have impaired digestion and absorption or who are taking certain medications, such as antacids and metformin," she says. Have some blood work done to test for anemia and nutritional deficiencies, and in the meantime increase your intake of dark green leafy vegetables, beans, free-range chicken and grass-fed beef.

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