

# The 7 deadly skincare sins



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Looking after your skin – how complicated can it be, right? Can't you just slap on some cleanser in the shower, wash it off, and you're good to go? Well, there's a little more to have that glowy look many aspire for – but often don't achieve!

The good news is that you can get there with the right information and a little loving discipline! Here are the seven deadly sins you need to be mindful of:

## 1. Leaving skin thirsty

For those of you with oily skin, it may seem counter-intuitive to use a moisturiser after cleansing. But skin oil is not the same as skin hydration – and what a moisturiser does is *hydrate* the skin. When water is absorbed into the deeper layers of the skin, it can help the complexion to maintain its protective qualities and uphold its plumpness, elasticity and resilience.

Stripping away the oils through cleansing can lead to a loss of moisture. Add to that the environmental stresses our skin faces daily, i.e. artificial heating and cooling, sun and wind exposure; it doesn't take long for it to become dehydrated. With prolonged dehydration, your skin is at greater risk of inflammation, becoming dull and ageing prematurely. It is easy to see why leaving the skin thirsty is the first sin we want to avoid.



## 2. Perfume overkill

You may enjoy freshening yourself up with your favourite fragrance before you go out, but that perfume you're addicted to wearing is doing your skin and your health some serious damage.

Let's explain. Excess application of perfumes, chemically scented deodorants, creams and lotions may alter the pH of the outer protective layer of your skin. This compromises its functions and makes it more vulnerable to sun damage, especially on the thin skin of the décolletage.

Not to mention, most commercial perfumes, no matter how expensive, contain thousands of toxic chemicals that are not disclosed under the "trade secret" code, including endocrine disruptors and carcinogens.



### 3. Wearing makeup to bed

We've all done it. Gotten made up and had a wild night out, only to fall into bed in the early hours of the morning, too tired to think about anything but our pillow. No doubt, the last thing on our minds is our skincare routine!

The truth is, this can have detrimental effects on our complexion. Makeup can trap dirt and environmental pollutants inside the skin and increase free radical damage. This can slowly degrade your collagen supplies and make you age faster.

Therefore, you must always cleanse and moisturise your face before bed, no matter how tired you are!



#### 4. Alcohol

Did you know that when you drink alcohol, your body responds by breaking it down into a chemical called acetaldehyde? This toxic by-product damages your DNA and prevents your body from effectively repairing the damage.

This means your skin loses moisture, which explains why your face often feels rough and dry the morning after a big night out. Eventually, acetaldehyde is excreted from the body, but before it does, it is also responsible for the symptoms of a hangover.

The solution to this is to always eat a nutritious meal to line your stomach before you consume alcohol, drink in moderation and ensure you take in plenty of water throughout the evening. This way, your body will be able to flush the toxins out more quickly. One glass of water for each alcoholic drink is a good rule of thumb.



#### 5. Not enough beauty sleep

We all feel the physical symptoms of a late night after trying to complete a work deadline or watching one too many episodes of the latest Netflix series. But do you notice the impact it has on your skin? If you pay attention, you will.

Lack of sleep increases the stress hormone cortisol, which makes your sebaceous glands produce more oil. It also messes with the body's natural production of cytokines, which help it fight infections. When we don't get enough sleep, our skin can have avoidable breakouts and unnecessary inflammation.

Restoring a sleep debt by taking naps or following a strict bedtime schedule will allow your body (and, in turn, your skin!) to get back on track.

## 6. Poor dietary choices

We all have cravings for 'bad' food, often after overindulgences of a different kind. We know certain foods aren't good for our overall health, but we likely overlook their impact on our skin.

Trans fats and refined sugar increase insulin resistance in the body, elevating sex hormones. These make your skin produce more of the oily substance sebum, which can lead to unwanted breakouts or blemishes. Our advice is to choose oatmeal and yoghurt with blueberries or avocado on toast instead.



## 7. Eating the wrong oil

Usually disguised with the name "vegetable oil", the oil present in most processed foods – from muesli bars to dips – is often a type of seed oil high in polyunsaturated fatty acids. Hydrogenation of these oils makes them more solid and (in the case of margarine, etc.) more spreadable.

However, this can lead to oxidation, making the oil susceptible to free radical attack, which can then cause damage to your body's DNA. When you are subsequently exposed to the sun, your risk of premature ageing and even skin cancer increases.

Eating foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon and avocado, is a much better alternative, as these are needed to regulate the skin's oil production and soothe irritation. Always reading the label of food items will ensure you maintain your youthful skin with every upcoming birthday!

*Written by Zanna Taeni*

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