

HOW TO > HEALTH

WHY YOU SHOULD BE PAYING MORE ATTENTION TO YOUR MICROBIOME

The microbiome - have you been seeing it everywhere recently? We're almost certain you have: it's the new frontier of wellness. The health of our gut microbiome affects a myriad of functions in our body - its impact, historically underestimated, is only now being fully discovered, and if you're in any shape or form concerned about your health, it should certainly not be ignored. To complicate matters further, our skin has its own microbiome that needs nurturing to keep things in tip-top condition. We chatted with some experts about all things microbiome - and why you'll be hearing a lot more about it from now on.



IMAGE: INSTAGRAM @CAMILLECHARRIERE

WHAT IS THE SKIN MICROBIOME AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?

We first asked **Cheryl Ross**, formulator for cult A-Beauty brand **Minnessey**, about the fundamentals. "The skin microbiome is a community of microorganisms, mostly bacteria, that protect the skin and keep the skin barrier functioning," she explained. "Your microbiome helps to keep your skin healthy. The primary role of the skin is to serve as a physical barrier to protect from foreign organisms or toxic substances."

HOW CAN WE BEST CARE FOR IT?

So we've established its importance - how can we go about keeping our skin microbiome as healthy as possible? "We have long known about the health benefits of maintaining balance in the gut microbiome but when it comes to skin care, bacteria have generally been perceived as something we need to remove," said Cheryl. "Today, the skin microbiome is increasingly thought to be the key to enhancing skin appearance - addressing the causes of skin conditions rather than just the symptoms."

And there's a lot that can harm our skin microbiome. "Environmental pollution, blue light, stress, some medications and skin trauma can alter the bacterial balance on the skin and can lead to complaints such as acne, dermatitis, eczema and redness," listed Cheryl.

"To fully appreciate the benefits of the skin microbiome requires understanding the skin as a living ecosystem. It is important not to over strip the skin by using harsh cleansers, or the overuse of harsh AHAs. **Minnessey** products are formulated to maintain the balance for all skin types."

WHAT ARE THE BEST PRODUCTS AND INGREDIENTS FOR A HEALTHY SKIN MICROBIOME?

In terms of what you should look out for, Cheryl explained: "To achieve well balanced, glowing skin, it all starts with hydration but, as with gut health, prebiotics and probiotics also play an important role in achieving skin health and balance."

"Minnessey's recently released **Hydrating Range** has been formulated with ACB Yoghurt Dermal Respiratory Factor to increase cellular respiration through increased oxygen intake, increase cellular metabolism and collagen synthesis in concert with other hero ingredients such as flannel flower, hyaluronic acid, marshmallow, desert red quandong, Siberian ginseng, daisy flower, balance the skin and provide deep hydration and optimum results."



MINNESSEY HYDRATING DYNAMIC FACIAL ESSENCE



MINNESSEY HYDRATING QUENCHING AQUA CREAM

Our picks from the range? The **Hydrating Dynamic Facial Essence** is a boon for dehydrated complexions (i.e. probably most of us), while the **Hydrating Quenching Aqua Cream** packs a hydrating punch while remaining lightweight and absorbing swiftly.

WHAT IS THE GUT MICROBIOME?

We first asked **dietitian Chloe McLeod** about the fundamentals. "Our gut microbiome is made of trillions of organisms, and these healthy bacteria play a role in many of our body's functions," Chloe shared. "Our microbiome can impact nearly every part of our body - our mood, weight and risk of developing numerous health conditions." So, as you can see, it's pretty important.

HOW CAN WE BEST CARE FOR OUR GUT MICROBIOME?

The basic rule is to up the variety of what you're eating. "The number one way is by eating a variety of plants - you should aim for 30 plants per week for optimum gut health," Chloe continued. "Fibre is the hero when it comes to gut health, so including all these plants helps us meet our daily fibre needs. On top of this, healthy fats from extra virgin olive oil, avocados, nuts and seeds and fish, along with fermented dairy - such as yoghurt and kefir - are also beneficial."

Celebrity personal trainer **Ricardo Riskalla** (Sigourney has sworn by his wellness wisdom for years) explained why fermented foods are vital to good health: "The digestive system relies heavily on the power of fermented foods in order to obtain not only good bacteria that helps with digestion but to help the body to absorb nutrients," he shared. "The best form of fermented foods are fermented vegetables like **sauerkraut**. After sauerkraut I recommend my clients have a daily dose of fermented seed cheese (**recipe here**) or coconut yogurt."

RICARDO'S WELLNESS PICKS

FIJIAN NONI JUICE

LOVING EARTH CACAO POWDER

BRAGG APPLE CIDER VINEGAR

"I am also a big fan of other fermented foods like noni juice, raw cacao powder and apple cider vinegar, which should be part of your daily diet. I love to include lots of fermented foods when creating diets for models and actors. They create an amazing skin glow."

MICROBIOME-FRIENDLY FAVOURITES

MINNESSEY HYDRATING CLEANSING SOUFFLÉ

COYO NATURAL YOGHURT

MINNESSEY HYDRATING COMPLETE EYE CREAM

Story by Tess Schlink. In association with Minnessey.