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Beauty & style

Surprising Skin Aging Antagonists: Face the Facts

By Dr. Tess Mauricio

Doing the wrong thing can certainly speed up your skin's aging process, and you might be surprised at what some of those no-no's are. Here are 5 ways to ensure you continue to put your best face forward:

1. Avoid drinking through straws. I'm sure many of you drink dark sodas, tea and coffee through a straw to prevent staining your pearly whites or to avoid putting your mouth on a can or bottle, right? Do Not Sip From a Straw! It's causing fine lines around your mouth, a sign of premature aging to your facial skin area. Over the long-term, pursing your lips to sip out of a straw causes extra wrinkles around the mouth.

2. Train yourself to sleep on your back. Resting your face on the pillow in the same way every night for years on end leads to wrinkles. Called sleep lines, these wrinkles eventually become etched on the surface of the skin and no longer disappear when the head is not resting on the pillow. Women, who tend to sleep on their sides, are most likely to see these lines appear on their chin and cheeks. Men tend to notice these lines on

the forehead since they usually sleep with the face pressed face down on the pillow. People who sleep on their backs do not develop these wrinkles since their skin does not lie crumpled against the pillow.

3. Pull down the shade in an airplane. You're much closer to the sun in a plane than on land, so it stands to reason that solar rays, which can penetrate windows, are more intense at higher altitudes. This may explain why pilots and flight attendants have been found to be at an increased risk for melanoma and other skin cancers. Plus, the air up there is notoriously dry—and without moisture, skin, like any living tissue, simply shrivels. Drink as much water as you can in flight; avoid alcohol and salty foods, which are dehydrating. Apply a rich moisturizer with SPF 15 or higher 30 minutes before boarding, as sunscreen needs time to be absorbed before it's effective. And if you're sitting next to a window, pull down the shade.

4. Beware beauty creams with toxic ingredients. Yes, exposure to some beauty cream chemicals do more harm than good. You may be surprised to hear this, but many ingredients in beauty creams actually speed up the aging process. Avoid buying beauty creams that contain parabens, mineral oil, paraffin, petrolatum, dimethicone, and other toxic ingredients. When buying a beauty cream, read the label carefully and talk to your dermatologist before experimenting with a new facial product.

5. Maintain a healthy weight. Packing on pounds can make your skin look plumper on the surface, but carrying excess weight can cause your body's levels of insulin (a hormone made by the pancreas that controls the amount of sugar in your blood) and cortisol to rise, which can break down collagen. You'll see increased sagging from putting and keeping on as little as 10 to 15 extra pounds. Loss of facial fat causes sagging and a gaunt, aged appearance. In addition, repeatedly gaining and losing weight can take its toll on the skin's elasticity, leaving behind stretch marks and jowls. Yo-yo dieting also causes premature aging. The repeated weight gain and loss stretches your skin and makes it loose and saggy. Maintain a healthy weight with proper diet and exercise. Aim to keep your weight in the normal range, with a body mass index between 18.5 and 24.9.

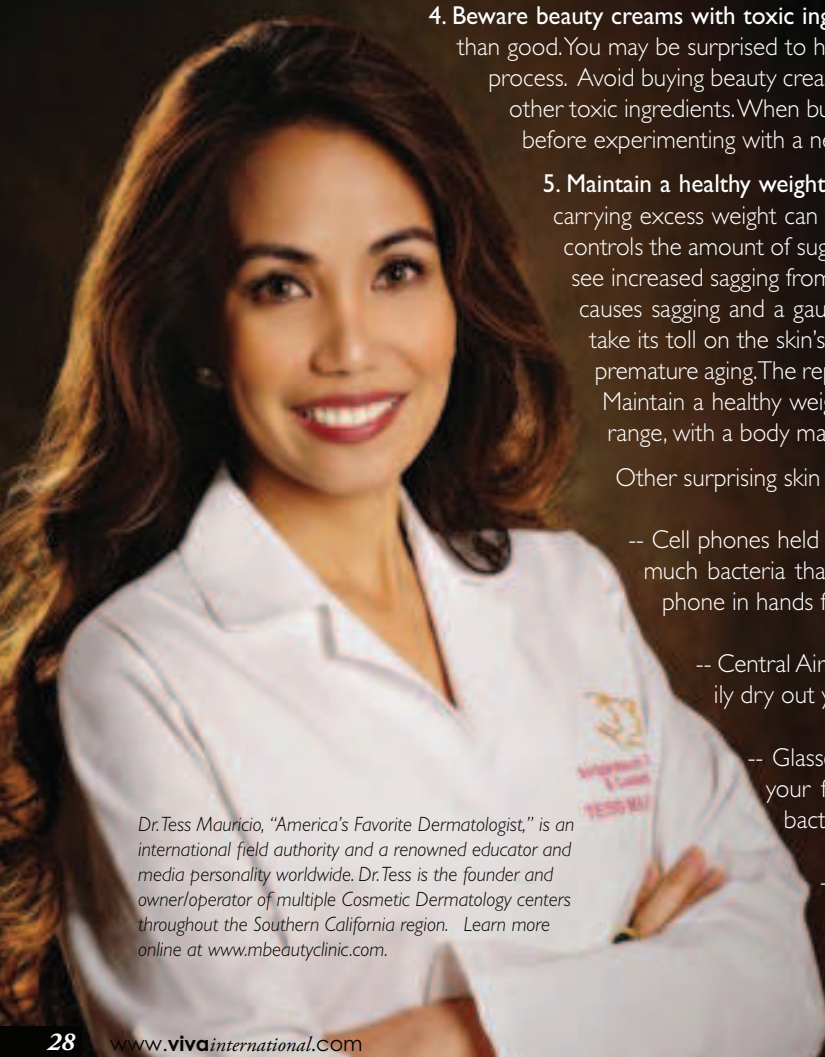
Other surprising skin aging antagonists to avoid include:

-- Cell phones held against your face - phones get left around on various surfaces and pick up much bacteria that can cause pimples around cheeks and jawline. It's best to use your cell phone in hands free mode!

-- Central Air Conditioning and Heat - pulls essential moisture from the air and can readily dry out your face skin

-- Glasses & Sunglasses - bacteria can grow on the frame that will sit directly on your facial skin for an extended period of time (simply wipe clean with antibacterial cloth before putting glasses on each day)

-- Chlorine - after a dip in the pool or hot tub, don't just rinse skin with water to think the chlorine is gone...scrub the face with a sudsy cleanser to remove all chemical residue and be sure to moisturize afterward!



Dr. Tess Mauricio, "America's Favorite Dermatologist," is an international field authority and a renowned educator and media personality worldwide. Dr. Tess is the founder and owner/operator of multiple Cosmetic Dermatology centers throughout the Southern California region. Learn more online at www.mbeautyclinic.com.