

Spa Nutrition

by pat lam

The entry of spas in the wellness arena has sparked a deeper interest in health services. Many spas list their menus as health and wellness, offering a plethora of services such as "The Healthy Program" and "A Day of Beauty." The media abounds with articles on various topics of health and wellness, and in almost every consumer health and beauty magazine, there is an article on healthy eating and exercise. We have come a long way in educating the public about health and most people are more aware, particularly the aging population who actively are seeking strategies and information on maximizing their good health and longevity. The trend of healthy living is here to stay.

In recent years, the term "spa" has come to mean a cheerful, relaxing place that is devoted to health. Many spa menus list services as "anti-aging," encompassing hydrotherapy, aromatherapy, facial and body treatments, body wraps, hair removal, scalp treatments, nutrition counseling, weight management and body toning treatments, and all infer that they can help people look and feel better. It now is firmly established that healthy nutrition forms the basis of all skin and body treatments, and proper care of the skin and body is not complete without treating the body from the inside out. In the public eye, the term *wellness* may entice clients to make appointments to become "well" as the word implies, and they may harbor an expectancy that they will feel well after spa treatments.

Therefore, it is important that estheticians become more knowledgeable in this area of health—destination spas in particular, which offer wellness programs that include not only nutrition guidance but also mind and body fitness. These spas employ professionals in areas such as nutrition and fitness. But what about the estheticians working in the day spas, health spas and medical



spas? They have become more interested in learning about nutrition and how they can dispense advice to their health-savvy clients. The small day spas cannot afford to hire these professionals and in most cases, nutritionists are not necessary unless the client has a health problem. These "normal" clients simply need motivation and guidance to make healthier choices in lifestyle behaviors to optimize utmost care of their skin and body.

Dispensing free nutrition advice helps to strengthen the client's confidence in the spas—all fine and good. But as a business venture, how can this service be used to increase revenue in the spas? Once the client understands that improper dietary habits and other lifestyle behaviors may be the cause of their skin and body conditions, they will be more likely to purchase dietary supplements and products recommended to them. People need to be told that what they eat will affect their appearance, and education in healthy eating is therefore the first step to success in helping clients attain wellness.

It's important to learn more about a few of the most common skin and body conditions and their attributing causes, as well as some helpful information on dietary strategies for improvement.



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Can the spa therapist help clients achieve or maintain a healthy body weight? The obesity epidemic that is prevalent throughout the world needs to be addressed and the spa professional is ideally situated in society to help bring about positive lifestyle changes. How can we offer wellness if people are overweight or obese? A healthy body weight is the first step to attaining the state of wellness and health, and is truly anti-aging therapy. The short-term sense of wellness experienced in the spa is good but we can transfer this to longer term benefits if we help promote healthy living. We need to be more educated in health topics, particularly nutrition and exercise, because they form the platform for health.

NUTRITIONAL SKIN CARE

Using nutritional regimens augmented by dietary supplements can enhance the results of skin and body treatments, and minimize skin inflammation and disorders. A high percentage of clients already are using dietary supplements on a daily basis. Studies show that they purchase dietary supplements such as vitamins, minerals, enzymes, herbs and pre-digested proteins to maximize their health from informa-

tion obtained from the Internet, friends or the pharmacist. In order to give nutritional guidance, a prescription form with questions that will give a brief listing of some pertinent health history, medication for chronic diseases, drugs (including birth control pills), and even ethnicity and other lifestyle behaviors should be included. Questions on regular daily food intake including drinks, food preparation as well as other negative lifestyle behaviors, such as smoking, need to be asked. Many people do not make healthy choices in eating due to insufficient knowledge, and several nutritional deficiencies simply can be the cause of a poor skin complexion.

Skin care professionals do not have to be nutritionists to guide clients to healthier eating. When confronted with these skin conditions, educate the client with information on the causes of the skin condition and how treatments would help. (See **Skin Condition Causes**.) Include information on proper dietary and lifestyle behaviors that will improve the skin's complexion as well. In this way, the credibility of the skin care professional will be enhanced and the "wellness" image of the spa professional will be adopted more firmly in the public mind.

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