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Questions and Answers

Plants and veggies

Q: What natural ingredients are you most excited over?

A: Botanical additives are now widely used in skin care products. The concept that pure or natural ingredients are more advantageous than synthetically derived ingredients is more of a consumer marketing tool than a scientifically proven truth. While many herbal remedies have true therapeutic value, some do not and others are actually harmful. Green tea extract has anti-inflammatory effects and has been shown to be beneficial in the treatment of acne. It has attracted much interest as an adjunctive therapeutic agent in the dermatology community.

There is no evidence that eating chocolate or greasy foods increases acne breakouts.

Cooking with rosacea

Q: I suffer from rosacea and sensitive skin. I love to cook, but I find my rosacea flares up when I spend a lot of time in the kitchen. What do you recommend?

A: In the kitchen, you should drink cool liquids or chew on ice chips, keep the room cool with air conditioning and a fan, take frequent breaks, and intermittently dab your face and neck with a cool cloth.

Topical licorice application

Q: I've had melasma for years. I heard that licorice applied topically can lighten skin pigment. Is this true?

A: Licorice contains glycyrrhetic acid that has been shown to decrease skin inflammation and may reduce skin pigment. Many over-the-counter products now contain licorice.

Lemon exfoliation

Q: One of my clients uses lemon juice and a rough washcloth to exfoliate her skin. She thinks the vitamin C can just be rubbed on and dead skin rubs off. What should I tell her?

A: While exfoliation with a rough washcloth can be helpful, I would not recommend using lemon juice because this can cause irritation and post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation.

Taking antibiotics

Q: I'm taking tetracycline antibiotics for my acne condition. My condition is not improving. What am I doing wrong?

A: If you have been taking tetracycline along with iron supplements, then you've been reducing the tetracycline serum levels' efficacy by, at



the most, 50 percent. Also, dairy products, antacids and zinc supplements decrease tetracycline serum levels. Don't take your tetracycline two to three hours before or after you consume iron or zinc supplements, antacids or dairy products.

Chocolate and skin

Q: Over the holidays and last month we pigged out on chocolate and a lot of fatty foods. Now, I'm breaking out like crazy. Do chocolate and fatty foods cause acne?

A: Contrary to popular belief, there is no evidence that eating chocolate or greasy foods increases acne breakouts. ■

Debra Price, M.D., is a diplomate of the American Board of Dermatology and an assistant professor at the University of Miami's department of dermatology and cutaneous surgery. Dr. Price is past president of the Miami Dermatologic Society, in Florida. She has a private practice in Kendall, FL. Call her at (305) 670-1111.