Face facts

We've all seen the advertisements that show various celebrities sporting a milk moustache, but is it possible that drinking milk actually does leave its mark on your face?

According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* in 2005, researchers found that dairy products such as skim milk, sherbet, cottage cheese, and cream cheese were linked to acne in young women with doctor-diagnosed severe teenage acne. Age, age of first menstruation, energy intake, and body mass index were also considered in the study. Researchers hypothesize that the hormones and bioactive molecules found in milk and milk products might be a factor in the development of acne.

In other skin news, researchers at Stanford University School of Medicine found that outbreaks of acne correlate with episodes of stress experienced at exam time. After adjustments for variables such as sleep quality, changes in duration of sleep, diet, and the number of meals taken per day, researchers found that increased stress had a significant influence on the development of acne.

Managing sunlight

Our bodies need sunlight to make vitamin D, but too much sun exposure ages the skin prematurely, and this damage is cumulative, building up over the years.

Compare the skin on the back of your hand, which has had maximum exposure, with that of your midriff, which presumably has seen less sun. As we get older, our skin becomes drier and less elastic, but sunlight appears to be responsible for most of the changes in skin's appearance: roughness, fine wrinkles, liver spots, and coarse texture.

Sunscreen helps block ultraviolet rays that damage skin, but using it doesn't mean you can spend extra hours in the sun. Consider it just one of the tools to protect your skin.

Your natural health store can direct you to sunscreen products that block the dangerous rays effectively without relying on unpleasant chemicals that can be absorbed into the body.

In addition, use common sense when planning outdoor activities: stay out of direct sunlight in the middle of the day, cover up whenever practical, and use a gentle moisturizer regularly.

Do yourself a favour—enjoy the sun, but cut down on the baking time. Your skin will thank you for it.

More beauty information on page 74
Copyright of Alive: Canadian Journal of Health & Nutrition is the property of Canadian Health Reform Products Ltd. and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.