

NEW YOU

THE FUTURE OF BEAUTY AND ANTI-AGING

Eyes Wide Open

By: Maryann Hammers

The ultimate beauty secret? Youthful-looking eyes



The eyes. There is nothing more powerful on your face: They cry, they laugh; they show disappointment, dreaminess or deceit; they reveal surprise and shock, happiness and honesty. Beyond expressing how you feel, they can even define who you are.

“The eyes are the most important part of our faces for communication,” says Steven H. Dayan, MD, a Chicago board-certified plastic surgeon and clinical assistant professor at the University of Illinois. “Corneal tracking studies reveal that the eyes are the first feature someone looks at.” What’s more, says Dr. Dayan, “Eyes are critical to appearing attractive.”

So with all the significance we place on eyes, it seems like a cruel twist of fate that they exhibit signs of aging so soon—not only in how we see ourselves, but in how others see us.

“The appearance of our eyes affects the way others respond to us,” says [Joseph A. Eviatar, MD](#), an oculofacial plastic, cosmetic and reconstructive surgeon in New York City. “People assume that if your eyes look young, you have more energy, more spunk, and are more of a go-getter.”

So when that reflection looking back at you looks more like your mother than yourself, it’s time to consider what steps you can take to keep your eyes looking younger, longer.

Eye-Q

As we well know, the quality of our skin changes as we lose collagen and volume, both results of the natural aging process. As we age and skin becomes thinner, the area under the eyes becomes looser.

“Blood vessels behind thinning skin create shadows and dark circles,” Dr. Dayan says. “Cheeks descend, so you start getting a hollow under the lower eyelid.”

The movement of facial expressions can also age the eye area. Crow’s feet and forehead wrinkles pop up, caused by raising and furrowing eyebrows and squinting. “That leads to sagging skin in the upper eyelid, exacerbated by brow and forehead descent,” says Sean M. Blaydon, MD, a San Antonio boardcertified ophthalmologist and ophthalmic plastic, orbital and reconstructive surgeon.

Dark circles, hollow-looking eyes, sagging eyelids? No wonder people have been asking about your health.

“These changes give the impression that you are older, tired, less alert, sad, less enthusiastic, a bit depressed, sleep-deprived, overstressed and in need of a vacation,” says Lyle M. Back, MD, a New Jersey board-certified plastic surgeon.

Beautiful Outside-In

Minor cosmetic tweaks can go a long way towards improving your appearance and boosting your self confidence. A little Botox or Dysport, for example, can erase crow’s feet and raise the eyebrows, offering a mini-brow lift for those with minor eyelid drooping; fillers can plump the hollows; chemical peels or laser treatments can tighten the area around lower eyelids.

As for the external-internal connection, research shows that minor cosmetic tweaks can not only create a more attractive face, but also result in a more fulfilling life by boosting self esteem and quality of life.

Based on research Dr. Dayan has published both this year and last, he suggests that “Those who get Botox project a more favorable first impression. So not only does Botox make someone look better, but it also makes them feel better. Evidence shows that people with higher self-esteem are judged more favorably. So the key to being beautiful and leading a better quality of life is to feel beautiful.”

The Eyes In Focus

One day you uncomfortably realize that you can't read the menu at your favorite restaurant. Price tags are difficult to decipher. You stretch your arm out farther and farther to read magazines.

What's going on?

"The lens starts to harden usually around age 40," says Joseph A. Eviatar, MD, assistant clinical professor of Ophthalmology at New York Medical College. "That hardening causes us to need reading glasses because the lens cannot focus."

The condition is called "presbyopia," and sooner or later, it happens to everyone. You can pick up reading glasses at the drugstore, or head to the ophthalmologist for prescription spectacles. Not ready for granny glasses? You have options:

***Contacts.** "We use contacts to correct the dominant eye for distance, and nondominant eye for reading," Dr. Eviatar says. This means you learn to use one eye for close-up vision, while using the other to focus on distant objects. Bifocal contacts are another popular option.*

***LASIK.** "You can also achieve mono-vision correction with LASIK or mono-focal surgery," Dr. Eviatar says. "This is useful for patients who are just starting to need reading glasses, where the difference between the eye prescriptions is not that bad."*

***Lens implants.** This surgical procedure is growing in popularity for both distance and near vision. "There may be side effects like glare, but the technology has improved dramatically in the last two years," Dr. Eviatar says. "Most patients who undergo the surgery are thrilled."*

Beauty Quest

It's safe to assume that most of us would like to feel that beauty Dr. Dayan refers to. And smiling back at that reflection gazing at us in the mirror?—The proverbial cherry on top. So what's a girl to do?

Experts advise slowing down the ravages of time by first evaluating your lifestyle. You already know you should eat more antioxidant-rich, colorful fruits and veggies, get enough sleep, quit smoking, and reduce stress—so we won't nag you further, other than to point out that all those healthy changes dramatically affect how old your eyes look. "Eyelids and eyes reveal the truth," points out Dr. Back. (In other words, you can't hide behind those tired eyes!)

Other simple ways to keep your eyes bright and beautiful? First of all, block the sun.

“Prolonged sun exposure leads to wrinkles, pigment mottling and loss of elasticity, as well as skin cancer,” Dr. Blaydon says. “If I recommend just one product, it would be an effective sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher and broad-spectrum protection against both UVA and UVB rays.”

Next up, shades. More than just a chic accessory, sunglasses also help to protect your eyes from UVA rays. “Wear sunglasses, even when it’s raining or cloudy,” says Adam Scheiner, MD, an eyelid and laser facial aesthetic specialist at the Tampa Eye Clinic in Florida. “UVA rays penetrate clouds and car windows and damage our skin. Sunglasses also help prevent the formation of pinguecula and pterygia [growths on the white part of the eye that can make the whites of the eye look red or yellow].”

Most doctors also suggest a high quality, medically based, gentle antioxidant moisturizer formulated for the eyelid, such as NIA 24 eye cream. “Use during the day and before going to sleep after gently washing the face,” Dr. Back advises.

Dr. Blaydon, who prefers Lumiere Bio-Restorative Eye Cream or SkinCeuticals Eye Cream, also recommends a prescription-strength Retin A applied to the lower eyelid skin. “Just a small amount each morning can protect the delicate skin of the lower eyelid,” he says.

Supplements, too, may offer the benefits of youth to aging eyes. Dr. Dayan recently presented the results of a year-long clinical study, which revealed that a supplement containing omega-3 fatty acids, ascorbic acid, beta-carotene, zinc, lutein, vitamin B and CoQ10 reduced wrinkles around the eyes and improved the skin’s appearance overall.

But don’t make a dash for the health food store just yet. Unfortunately, that particular product isn’t commercially available. (That’s not to say you shouldn’t take supplements with these ingredients or others, however.) “We are just beginning to learn about the impact nutrition has on our skin,” Dr. Dayan says. “Many manufacturers claim skin and beauty benefits, but few have any well-done clinical trials to support the claims.”

As for the idea of supplementing your way to more youthful eyes and skin, “I am convinced oral supplements will be part of our cosmetic regimens in the future,” Dr. Dayan adds. “You will soon see beauty-enhancing nutritional products, backed by science. But that’s a whole story unto itself.”

In the meantime, here’s looking at you, Beautiful!

EYE OPENERS

Sometimes surgery is just what the doctor ordered.

OLD YOU

NEW YOU



Female patient before and after an endoscopic forehead lift and upper and lower blepharoplasty.

OLD YOU

NEW YOU



Female patient before and after an endoscopic forehead lift and upper and lower blepharoplasty.

Before and after courtesy of Dr. Sean Blaydon

OLD YOU

NEW YOU



Female patient before and 15 weeks after upper and lower blepharoplasty.

OLD YOU

NEW YOU



49-year-old female patient before and three months after blepharoplasty.

Before and after courtesy of Dr. Joseph Estavar