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## Insider secrets for natural beauty

**Q |** When should I start using anti-aging products? I am about to turn 25 and I had heard that was the time to start. What products should I use and what ingredients should I look for?

- Justine, Kingston

**A |** Dear Justine,

In my opinion it's never too early to start as anti-aging is really the buzzword for preventative products that contain antioxidants. Antioxidants target specific components of the cells in your skin and help to reduce the risk of wrinkles and protect against sun damage. Antioxidants include vitamins A, C, E, selenium, CoQ10 and alpha-lipoic acid.

Look for products derived from pure and natural ingredients. Try to stay away from products containing sodium lauryl sulfate (SLS), propylene glycol (PG), isopropyl alcohol, mineral oil, diazolidinyl urea, FD & C colour and all fragrances. Depending on your skin type, I would recommend keeping it simple with a cleanser, toner and light moisturizer high in antioxidants.

For a more intensive approach, you could try an AFA facial peel which has powerful antioxidants and exfoliants.

**Q |** Is there anything I can do to strengthen my fingernails? Mine always grow to a certain point and feel quite strong but then begin to peel and soften once they reach a nice length.

-Dianne, Burlington

**A |** Dear Dianne,

As nails are made up of keratin (a protein), you may want to address your protein intake. Eating more protein-rich foods will help to develop stronger nails. Calcium, iron and silica are also needed for healthy nails. I would also recommend you take fish oil on a daily basis as it is essential in maintaining healthy skin and nails. Remember to eat well-balanced meals and drink plenty of water.

In addition to getting the right nutrients, you may want to massage a nourishing oil such as jojoba oil into the nail and nail bed. As water is the nail's biggest enemy, try wearing cotton-lined rubber gloves if your nails spend a lot of time submerged in water. Take a two-week break from nail polish once in awhile to keep nails healthy. Choose polish without toluene and nail hardeners that contain formaldehyde as they will dry out your nails over time. Keep in mind that nails grow about three millimetres per month, so be patient as it will take two or three months to see results. **▼**



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