10 ways lemon water actually affects your skin

Courtney Leiva Aug. 1, 2018, 10:57 AM

Like apple cider vinegar, lemon water has been hailed as a beauty and wellness miracle worker for quite some time now, as some feel that sipping it first thing in the morning helps detoxify the body, allowing your skin to stay hydrated and look equally radiant.

However, topical uses of lemon water also have its perks, as some dermatologists say it's rich vitamin C and citric acid content helps fight fine lines and unwanted discoloration. But like all DIY remedies, lemon water also has its share of setbacks, as top dermatologists note that it can cause burns and irritation to the skin when exposed to direct sunlight.

To show you just how lemon water actually affects your skin, we spoke to some expert dermatologists on the topic just in case you are thinking about adding it to your everyday routine. Here are some things they recommend keeping in mind before you actually give it a try.

Drinking lemon water can help manage inflammation.

"Drinking lemon water in the morning on an empty stomach can help balance your body by inducing a more alkaline state, which is known to be anti-inflammatory to the skin and the body," said Dr. Gary Goldenberg of Goldenberg Dermatology .

Lemon water can be pretty harmful when applied topically.

"Lemon water is actually one of my least favorite ingredients for the skin," said board-certified dermatologist Dhaval G. Bhanusali, MD . While he said that lemon water is loaded in vitamin C, Bhanusali explained that he's seen lots of people experience a rash (called phytophotodermatitis) when lemon water is applied to the skin and is exposed to direct sunlight.

Drinking water can help your skin look radiant.

"As water is essential to the skin, adding lemon can help you drink more water throughout the day to help your skin look radiant," said Dr. Mona Gohara, vice president, Women's Dermatologic Society .

Vitamin C inside lemon water helps reduce signs of aging.

"Vitamin C stimulates collagen production and it helps to reduce signs of aging," board-certified dermatologist Dr. Debra Jaliman told INSIDER. This ingredient improves the skin's texture, firmness, and may help prevent fine lines, Dr. Jaliman said.

Citric acid inside lemon water can help treat mild acne and brown spots.

"Lemon juice contains citric acid which is helpful in treating mild acne and photoaging such as over tanned skin, wrinkles, and brown spots," said board-certified dermatologist Dr. Janet Prystowsky .

Drinking lemon water treats you to essential vitamin C.

"Drinking lemon water will help you meet your nutritional requirements of vitamin C but is unlikely to do much else for your skin," Dr. Prystowsky added.

It's important to dilute your lemon water if you use it topically.

"Undiluted lemon water can cause erosions and chemical burns, which can lead to inflammation and secondary hyperpigmentation," said board-certified dermatologist Tsippora Shainhouse . Do not apply lemon juice or lemon water to the skin as an astringent or toner, she said, as this can damage the epidermis and cause inflammation and potential scarring.

Drinking lemon water can help purify the skin and the body.

"Lemons enhance the purification abilities of skin and other cells," said board-certified dermatologist Dr. S. Manjula Jegasothy, MD . Drinking lemon water can induce skin cells to detox and force out impurities and sweat which can clog pores, she explained. This can also reduce the incidence of acne, she added.

Vitamin C inside lemon water helps form collagen in the body.

"Lemons are loaded with vitamin C in high concentration, which is the main ingredient in the formation of collagen in the body," said Yale-trained dermatologist Dr. Rhonda Klein . Collagen is what gives the skin elasticity, she explained, and it's also responsible for the regeneration of the skin cells in the body.

The rich antioxidant component to lemon water helps the skin repair itself.

"Lemons are also rich in antioxidants, which reduces free radical damage by improving the ability of the skin and DNA to repair itself," Dr. Klein added.