

The elderberry way to perfect skin

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Forget expensive moisturisers and cosmetic surgery, a compound found in the humble elderberry could give a natural boost to skin.

In the first study of its kind, a team of researchers led by Prof Aedin Cassidy at the University of East Anglia and Dr Paul Kroon at the Institute of Food Research, will explore whether the skin's condition is improved by a compound which gives berries their vibrant colour (called 'anthocyanin').

In a 12-week trial starting in September, post-menopausal women will consume either extracts from elderberries or placebo capsules, and will have their skin's structure and appearance measured with state-of-the-art equipment used by experts in skin science. At the same time, researchers will also test whether the elderberry extract can reduce risk factors for heart disease.

"We already know that a healthy diet can help protect against heart disease and skin damage, and that a mixture of similar food components have been shown to improve the skin's structure. There is also evidence that the active components have anti-inflammatory properties, which may be important in helping people stay healthy," said UEA's Dr Peter Curtis who is leading the project.

"If the results of our study are positive, it may lead to innovations in skin health products and may also give us vital information about diets which promote healthier hearts."

Source: University of East Anglia

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