

HAVE YOU GOT VEGAN WRINKLES?

That New-Year health kick sounds like it'll do the business for your waistline — but at what price to your skin?

Look at you, all flush with smugness over sticking to your New Year's diet. But while the pounds may be sliding off your body, are the years creeping onto your face? Dermatologists increasingly diagnose skin complaints based on a face-food link. So do dieticians; skin ailments give them a good clue as to what's wrong with your diet. "Certain foods or drinks can affect the gut negatively, and as your skin is related to your digestive health, this can result in inflammation, oxidative stress and signs of ageing on your face," says freelance dietician Kate Roberts. But before you roll your eyes and say, "Duh," it's not simply the usual culprits — gluten, dairy, wine and carbs — that are to blame for your gut/skin throwing a wobbly. It turns out that hallowed health foods such as fish, soya beans and *even* vegetables can cause trouble if you're not careful. Surprised? We were. So if you want to learn how to avoid the

skin-related pitfalls your health kick can bring, we suggest you read on...

SOYA FACE

So you've ditched dairy, and we're willing to bet that your spots have disappeared, too. One theory: cow's milk (even organic) contains the hormones testosterone and oestrogen, which cause oil glands to go into overdrive and make sebum thicker. "So instead of moving dead skin cells to the surface, the sebum forms a plug that clogs pores, and eventually causes blemishes," explains Peter Cox, clinical nutritionist at London's Omniya clinic.

But eliminating dairy from your diet altogether poses its own challenges. What going dairy-free gave you in clear skin, soya milk (made from water and ground-up soya beans) will take away in firmness. "Most soya milks are sweetened with added sugar (anything up to 12g per carton) to match the natural sweetness of milk,"

says Cox. Sugar molecules bind to proteins, including the collagen in your skin, in a process known as glycation. "Consequently, tissues become more brittle and wrinkles form prematurely," adds dermatologist Dr Harold Lancer. The other problem with shunning dairy is that it's a good source of calcium for healthy bones. "The bones of the eye socket, the chin and the area near the base of the nose in particular will erode with age, causing overlying tissue to sag," says oculoplastic surgeon Sabrina Shah-Desai. No anti-ageing cream can rectify that, so you need to eat calcium-rich foods to keep bone erosion at bay.

Fix it Increase your intake of green veg such as kale, bok choy and broccoli: Cox recommends at least one portion a day of these nutritional calcium bombs. In addition, he says those on dairy-free diets should eat "plenty of pulses, nuts and seeds; all contain significant amounts of calcium." As >

Turns out that *even* vegetables can cause gut and skin trouble

