

*Beauty Enquirer*

# Pop A 'Pretty Pill'

Shinier hair, glowing skin, the promises of supplements are more far-reaching than ever. Jessica Hough puts them to the test



ADMIT WITHIN the beauty community that you don't take supplements and you may as well have confessed to

leaving your make-up on every night for the last five years. The collective gasp is quite something. But I'm of the opinion that if you eat a well-balanced diet, as I do, you get all the nutrients you need from your food. So why do so many people, who I'm sure also eat well, still take supplements?

Ian Marber, The Food Doctor, refers to it as 'supplement guilt'; the modern-day phenomenon whereby a person thinks they should be taking more vitamins. But, for the same reason my father doesn't believe in insurance (no, really), I don't take vitamins – because I'll probably be OK without them.

Margo Marrone, founder of The Organic Pharmacy, is the first to set me straight. 'Most food is grown in soil that's been depleted of nutrients because of intensive methods of modern farming. Plus, plants are sprayed with chemicals to accelerate their growth, meaning they don't develop fully and, therefore, contain far fewer of the vitamins and minerals that they should be rich in. In addition to this lack of nutrients, our bodies have to process these foreign

chemicals, putting more strain on our immune systems.'

According to Margo, the average apple is sprayed with pesticides 15 times before it is picked and shipped to the supermarkets. It's virtually impossible to wash these chemicals off, so some residue will always remain and be inadvertently consumed.

**“Plants sprayed with chemicals contain far fewer vitamins”**

After 30 minutes with Margo, I feel like I can't afford *not* to take supplements and my body needs all the help I can give it. Everything she says about having a false sense of security in what we eat rings true and I feel a little naive that I've been happily consuming a host of chemicals and toxins, oblivious to the perils.

Of course my good health is imperative but, naturally, so is my appearance. Plus it's easier to note improvements when you can visibly gauge them. So I'm opting for hair, skin, nails and energy. Let the pill popping commence. *{continued}*

## 1 FOR HAIR

The good news is I have a lot of hair; the bad news is, much of it is in my hairbrush, around my tongs, about my person and, to the boyfriend's continual annoyance, on the bedroom carpet. Hair guru Philip Kingsley once told me that your whole head of hair is replaced every four years and, if I'm honest, that freaked me out. By my calculation that means I've had more than seven different heads of hair when I thought it was the same batch all this time. You think you know yourself...

## “If you only take one supplement, you should make it an antioxidant”

I begin taking **Philip Kingsley PK4 Hair, £22**, to make my hair more resilient and, consequently, stick around longer. It's only in week two of taking these soya proteins that I notice something's changed. Running a brush through my hair, I expect to be met with the standard tug of bristles hitting knots, but it never comes. Moreover, there's no cascade of snapped ends drifting towards the floor either. My hair's actually become more amenable to being groomed and is staying intact as a result.

## 2 FOR NAILS

Lucky for me the trend for nails right now is short and neat. If that ever changes, I might be in trouble. Yet, after just one week of taking **Advanced Nutrition Programme Nail Science, £23.45**, containing vitamin B12, my nails have had a growth spurt and, for the first time I can remember, I have to cut them. Usually they do me the courtesy of splitting or peeling, but



**THE SKIN SAVER**  
**Functionalab Pure Complexion Beauty Dose, £35**, Balances oily skin for fewer breakouts



**THE NAIL BOOSTER**  
**Advanced Nutrition Programme Nail Science, £23.45** Rich in vitamin B12 to toughen up talons

## WHAT'S SUPP? Your hair, skin and nails tablet toolkit



**THE HAIR HERO Philip Kingsley PK4 Hair, £22**  
A protein blast for hair that will help prevent breakages



**THE ALL-IN-ONE**  
**The Organic Pharmacy Superantioxidant, £37.50** Protects and rejuvenates cells from the inside

they're now so strong, I'm required to intervene with a pair of nail scissors. It's the sort of growth you get when you've been on holiday getting heaps of sunshine and eating vast amounts of fresh fruit.

## 3 FOR DRY SKIN

I'm your typical awkward combination, with dry skin at the start of the day but shiny as you like come 3pm. **Functionalab Pure Complexion Beauty Dose, £35**, contains milk protein to regulate the amount of oil your skin produces and vitamins C and E to boost collagen production. After two to three weeks, there's reduced shine and I've had zero breakouts, but I'm told it's the hardest to judge because you're treating the skin under the surface, which takes a full 28 days to regenerate.

## 4 THE ALL-ROUNDER

Margo has advised me that if you only take one supplement, you should make it an antioxidant. They're famed for improving your organs, skin, energy and protecting against free radicals to boot. **The Organic Pharmacy Superantioxidant, £37.50**, protects your body from the inside by concentrating on the cells. I soon notice that I'm up early, at the gym before work, out in the evenings and sleeping better. There's no tangible proof, but I'm not sure that I need it, a general feeling is enough for me to continue taking them.

## JESS'S VERDICT

Taking supplements isn't instantly gratifying, but it is a minimal effort for a noticeable outcome (as long as you remember to take them). I loved the cosmetic results, but I was most interested in the antioxidants that kept my insides beautiful. Pills aren't cheap but we can't expect our bodies to be on their A-game without giving them some nutritional support, especially as we get older. ■

## Vitamin injections: what you need to know

Dr Daniel Sister, top doc at sci-fi beauty clinic Beauty Works West, argues that the amount of nutrients you can take is limited by the capsule size (ie what you can physically swallow). That's why he developed Detox Defence & Immune Defence Infusions, a cocktail of vitamins intravenously injected into the body. This bypasses the digestive system, hitting your blood stream quicker and in a higher concentration. Only snag is, they're £700 a session. Rumour has it Rihanna's been undergoing a series of these shots to help her maintain her hectic lifestyle. Proof that even 24-year-olds need a helping hand sometimes.