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Ever since Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León searched for the Fountain of Youth when he traveled to present-day Florida in 1513, people around the world have longed for the secrets of staying young and healthy.

A multi-billion dollar industry, anti-aging products are quickly becoming among the fastest selling in America. From anti-aging creams that promise smoother skin to medicines and surgery that promise healthier joints, Americans realize that the Fountain of Youth doesn't come cheap.

In an age where medical costs are skyrocketing and the urge to stay young is overwhelming, perhaps a simpler solution than surgery or chemical medication exists.

A SMOOTHER ROAD TO SMOOTH SKIN

America's obsession with looking younger has become a money-making monster for companies world-wide. According to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, cosmetic plastic surgery procedures almost tripled from 1992 to 2000. In a 2002 article in the Christian Science Monitor, 786,911 people had botox injections in 2002 alone. Think it's only older women getting botox? Think again. The 35- to 50-year-olds make up nearly half of patients, with men getting more than a million procedures in 2000.

Papaya, long-used for its healing properties with burn victims, is getting attention for its possible anti-aging effects. Creams like Esthé Carica™ claim to gently reduce the appearance of wrinkles everywhere on the body. An extract of papaya a - tropical fruit native to southern Mexico and Central America - is its main ingredient.

According to the Esthé Carica website, Papaya is an excellent source of key antioxidants, containing the unique enzyme combinations, papain and carpain, as well as significant amounts of minerals, including potassium. The website claims that clinical studies suggest that papaya may reduce the appearance of acne scars, wound scars, and burns. It is believed these healing effects also reduce skin imperfections brought on by aging.

Modern science has confirmed the skin benefits of papaya that folk medicine around the world has recognized for centuries. Recent research substantiates the effectiveness of papaya as a gentle exfoliant and in the treatment of various skin conditions, including burns, skin ulcers and bacterial infections [West Indian Med J. 2000 March; 49(1):32-3., Burns. 1999 November; 25(7):636-9].

OH MY ACHING JOINTS!

Can glucosamine help rebuild damaged cartilage? Growing scientific studies are backing up evidence that it just might. According to the American College of Rheumatology, "1 out of 3 Americans experience joint pain from Osteoarthritis (American College of Rheumatology). In another study, the Glucosamine/Chondroitin Arthritis Intervention Trial, sponsored by the national Institutes of Health, findings suggest the combination of the two ingredients "is effective in treating moderate to severe knee pain due to Osteoarthritis (79.2 percent)."

The double-blind, placebo controlled study was designed to evaluate the efficacy of glucosamine, chondroitin sulfate, glucosamine/chondroitin sulfate combination and celecoxib.

To be effective, 900 mg per 100 pounds of bodyweight is needed in order to reap the benefits. Lurosil products, for instance, contain 100 percent pure glucosamine, an amino sugar believed to promote the formation and repair of cartilage. These statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

Each Lurosil product is designed to help take the stress off joints, and is available as tablets and as a topical cream.

TAKING THE WEIGHT OFF OF AGING

Besides looking and feeling younger, the drive to be at a healthy weight level is also foremost in American's minds. Phydrex is a weight-loss formula in a capsule form that includes a combination of four possible fat-fighters: green tea extract; glucomannan, chromium and hydroxycitric acid.

The key ingredient in Phydrex is glucomannan, a dietary fiber derived from the tubers of *Amorphophallus konjac*. Glucomannan may delay the absorption of glucose from the intestines. According to an article on Web MD, "Small limited studies have shown glucomannan to be effective in decreasing body weight."

There are certain side effects to glucomannan, including the possibility of esophageal obstruction, so talk to your doctor before deciding on a glucomannan regimen.

Another key element in Phydrex is Chromium Chromium, which is thought to enhance the effect of insulin and therefore the breakdown of carbohydrates. Although several studies have failed to show any benefit in weight loss after taking the mineral, Chromium Chromium has been touted as a weight loss aid and fat burner.

Bottom line is that the fountain of youth does not mean surgery or expensive pharmaceuticals. For more information on any of the products listed, please visit pachealth.com. Always speak to your doctor before starting any new regimen and be aware that statements have not been evaluated by the FDA. These products are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.