

Seabuckthorn – an inside out approach to adult acne

By Susan McLoughlin with Natalie Lanoville

*In a world where adult acne is rampant, and the pharmaceutical solutions are risky and unreliable, the superfruit Seabuckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides L.*) is a natural, viable solution.*

What is acne?

Acne is an inflammatory skin condition that typically occurs during puberty, when teenage hormones stimulate oil production, thicken the skin, and wreak havoc with the body's immune system. Acne forms when naturally-occurring bacteria normally present on our skin's surface becomes trapped in pores along with dead skin cells and sebaceous secretions (skin oil). Chronic inflammation and hormone imbalance increase the likelihood of acne breakouts by causing an excess of dead skin cells, compromising the immune system's ability to fight bacteria, and swelling shut the plugged pores.

Unfortunately, over the past couple of decades, adults in their 20s, 30s and 40s have been experiencing acne in increasing numbers. The upswing in adult acne could be considered an epidemic, frustrating sufferers who thought blemishes were decades behind them, and perplexing dermatologists who have lobbed all their pharmaceutical weapons at the problem with inconsistent results.

In the absence of a definitive pharmaceutical treatment, doctors and skin specialists have been increasingly prescribing steroids, antibiotics, and isotretinoin (retinol-A) – therapies with spotty success and significant side effects. The most successful non-pharmaceutical acne treatments are those that treat the whole body – and seabuckthorn perfectly fits the profile of a high-performance acne-fighting supplement.

What is seabuckthorn?

Seabuckthorn is a plant whose fruit and leaves have been used for hundreds of years to treat inflammatory skin conditions, both topically (applied to the skin) and internally.

Seabuckthorn is extremely nutrient-dense, with over 190 micronutrients and active ingredients including Quercetin and Salicyns (two of nature's most powerful anti-inflammatories), a range of Omega fatty acids (including the vital Omega 3), a vast array of health-promoting anti-oxidants including the skin friendly B, C and E complexes and Beta Carotene.

The most nutritious components of the seabuckthorn plant (the fruit, fruit seeds and leaves) are packaged for internal use as oil capsules, flavone (dried fruit pulp) capsules, and tea. The plant is prepared for topical use as skin and hair cleansers, tonics, and pure oil unguents.

Skin-care specialists and medical professionals in Asia and Europe have been using products from the seabuckthorn plant to improve skin health and heal serious skin conditions, including adult acne, for decades.

How can seabuckthorn help adult acne?

To understand why, first we must answer the question, *Why adult acne, and why now?* Cutting edge acne and skincare researchers are now convinced that adult acne does not have one single cause, but is rather a symptom of a system (the human body) under attack on multiple fronts (diet, hormonal and immune system imbalance, chemical fatigue, etc). Which explains why conventional research, which tests individual factors one at a time, hasn't been able to identify a solitary cause.

For decades, researchers studied individual foods (like chocolate or potato chips), but were unable to correlate these foods to acne outbreaks. However, recent studies of more general dietary trends have shown (in books such as Dr Alan Logan's *The Clear Skin Diet*) that a diet high in acne-fighting nutrients, fatty acids and phytochemicals will lead to fewer acne breakouts.

The key, skin care specialists believe, is to a) reduce inflammation, and b) balance the hormone and immune systems.

Seabuckthorn supplements and topical preparations provide dramatic, long-term relief from chronic inflammation, directly through many anti-inflammatory agents like salicyns, and quercetin - and indirectly by strengthening cell walls and regulating the flow of fluid between the body's cells.

In the acne sufferer, a combination of chronic inflammation and an unbalanced immune system promotes a frustrating and painful cycle of small, inconsequential blemishes growing larger, more inflamed, and harder to heal. Seabuckthorn's anti-inflammatory agents and moderating effect on the immune system breaks this cycle, allowing the rejuvenated, soothed body to do a better and faster job of repairing small blemishes and preventing new ones.

The way forward

Our modern diet is becoming more and more nutrient-depleted, and synthetic vitamins can only do so much to make up the deficit. Every day we're discovering new, vital micronutrients that only occur in whole foods. Natural, unprocessed seabuckthorn supplements fill the gaps that are leaving our bodies vulnerable to immune system imbalance and chronic inflammation, and seabuckthorn skin care provides a soothing, healing alternative to complex chemical-laden preparations.

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