There’s Life in the Dead Sea

This mineral-rich hypersaline body of water is actually a lake. Though its salts can’t sustain marine life, they are used to improve human skin care and health.

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If you can’t visit Israel to experience the healing minerals of the Dead Sea, don’t worry. Health and beauty product manufacturers are bringing the power of the Dead Sea to you.

One company, Adovia Mineral Skin Care, offers a special blend of Dead Sea salts and essential oils, specially formulated to leave your skin radiant and smooth and you in better spirits––thanks to the aromatherapeutic benefits of the oils.

Claudia Jordan, TV supermodel and host, testifies to the power of Dead Sea mineral salts as a satisfied Adovia products user and spokesperson. “It’s funny how something from the Dead Sea makes skin come alive, but it really does,” she says. “You really do see the difference.”

Jordan says the Dead Sea mineral salts beauty regimen she uses helps her maintain a youthful appearance.

But Hollywood celebrities aren’t the only ones benefiting from the Dead Sea’s rich minerals. Studies indicate that docs use Dead Sea mineral salts to soothe, calm and relieve skin conditions such as psoriasis.

In one four-week study, J. Arndt, MD, treated psoriasis patients with 20-minute full and partial baths using varying concentrations of Dead Sea bath salts. Within a week, patients experienced a reduction of psoriasis symptoms––itching, scaling, joint complaints and difficulties. In addition, patients realized a decrease in the condition’s spread, redness and infiltration.

Another study, by I. Machtey, MD, found that the salts lessened the pain and improved the mobility of rheumatic patients suffering from osteoarthritis (OA)—a common joint disease affecting middle-aged and older people.

A third study, by P. Engel, MD, resulted in significant relief for the majority of 60 patients with rheumatic disorders.

Although the three studies were done in 1982, they remain some of the most referenced research on the topic.

Many health and beauty practitioners agree with physicians about the therapeutic benefits of Dead Sea mineral salts and assert that the salts strengthen skin tissue, maintain the skin's chemical balance, stimulate blood circulation and detoxify the skin.

But while many people swear by the salts' cosmetic and medicinal properties, researchers such as Dina D. Strachan, MD, a board-certified dermatologist at Aglow Dermatology in New York City, point out that other factors are at play in these healing effects.

"Many times when people speak of the healing effects of Dead Sea minerals, they're referring to not just the minerals but the ecosystems," Strachan says. "Patients with skin diseases, including psoriasis, eczema and vitiligo, go to health resorts by the Dead Sea. I've had patients who have done this and who have gotten excellent results."

Patients who get treated at the Dead Sea also benefit from the area's lower elevation, which results in less UVB radiation––the sun's rays responsible for burning skin, Strachan explains. She points out a study regarding mineral water and psoriasis, which concluded that "it was the light, much more than the mineral water, that improved the condition—although the minerals did help."

Strachan also found another study indicating that the minerals "decreased roughness and had an "anti-wrinkle" effect." Given that, how does she feel about Dead Sea mineral salts' ability to improve skin quality and health with long-term use?

"That question remains to be answered," Strachan says.

In the meantime, Jordan continues basking in the glow of compliments about how young she looks. She doesn't sweat the science behind the products; she just uses them regularly.

"In this economy, a lot of women don't have the time and money to treat themselves to the luxury of a spa visit," Jordan says. "You can use these products and have your own private, at-home spa treatment to make you feel fabulous. It helps you get through your day and feel beautiful at home. It's not expensive and it's reasonable, so why not treat yourself?"

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