

Now

Beauty pills PRO OR CON?

Whether you want better skin or bigger boobs, there's a pill out there that promises to give you them. But do they actually work?

1 The detoxers

What are the claims? Celebs are detox-mad these days and, as usual, the rest of us follow suit. But to save us from living on wheatgrass and water, manufacturers have come up with detox pills such as Detoxil and Holland & Barrett Aloe Vera Colon Cleanse. They contain plant extracts, vitamins and minerals, which the makers say help your body naturally rid itself of the toxins and pollutants caused by a less-than-angelic lifestyle.

Are they worth it? 'Most people don't need to detox,' says The Food Doctor nutritionist Ian Marber. 'Our bodies do it naturally all the time. However, Detoxil [£7.95 for 30 tablets, from Boots, Superdrug and detoxil.com] is a good multivitamin. It contains ingredients that support the liver, which is the cleansing organ of the body, so it definitely has benefits – but only if you're following a reasonably healthy lifestyle.'



Verdict: cure

2 The boob boosters

What are the claims?

Natural herbal supplements, such as The Perfect C, promise to make your boobs up to three cup sizes bigger thanks to their special mix of plant extracts that promote your body's own production of oestrogen, which encourages breast tissue growth.

Are they worth it? 'Most of these so-called breast-boosting products contain fenugreek, a herb rich in plant oestrogens,' says Ian Marber. 'Rhubarb has plant oestrogens as well, but no one would believe me if I said rhubarb makes your breasts grow three cup sizes! So these claims sound far-fetched to me.'



Verdict: doubtful

3 The wrinkle fighters

What are the claims? Collagen is the natural protein in your skin that keeps it firm and plump. But after you hit 25, levels drop by about 1.5 per cent a year, so A-listers are now swallowing the stuff.

Collagen capsules claim to reduce lines and wrinkles and give skin a glow as an alternative to Botox. **Are they worth it?** 'Collagen capsules can help keep skin firm, but it's pushing it to say they're an alternative to Botox,' says Nina Goad of the British Skin Foundation. Try Proto-Col Collagen Capsules (£29.95 for 90, 0870 7703861, proto-col.co.uk) or Pure Col Collagen Capsules (£29 for a month's supply, collagenpure.co.uk).



Verdict: cure

4 The tan tablets

What are the claims? The harm caused by overtanning has been drummed into us, but we're still desperate for a J-Lo glow. It's claimed that products containing beta-carotene, such as Mary Cohr Pure Tanning Boosting Action and Imedeen Tan Optimizer tablets, will intensify skin colour. You're advised to take them before and after sun exposure and the makers say they'll also boost your skin's tolerance to UV light, meaning less sun damage.



Are they worth it?

'They won't protect skin from the sun,' says Nina Goad. 'And avoid ones with beta-carotene because it's linked to nausea and retinal damage.' Ian Marber agrees: 'There are concerns about taking beta-carotene supplements. Try Holland & Barrett's

L-Tyrosine [£3.99 for 60 tablets, 0870 6066605] instead – it safely stimulates melanin production, so that you get a tan from less sun.'

Verdict: doubtful

Hot-poppers

● **Naomi Campbell** and **Victoria Beckham** both swear by PhytoPhanère capsules. (£28 for 120, 020-7620 1771). The cocktail of vitamins and essential fatty acids keeps hair and nails in tip-top condition.

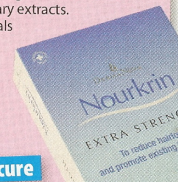
● **Super-slim Sophie Anderton** takes Oxy-Powder capsules (£26.95 for 120, 0800 0433280), a colon cleanser which claims to help shift excess weight.



5 The locks lengtheners

What are the claims? Thick, glossy, Mischa Barton-style hair is top of most women's wish lists. But stress, hormonal imbalances and even your genes can all take their toll and one in four women now suffer from hair loss. There are tons of hair-boosting pills out there and the makers claim they can prevent hair loss and keep locks long and lustrous. Most contain zinc and fenugreek, nettle and rosemary extracts.

Are they worth it? 'Yes – vitamins and minerals are essential for hair growth,' says trichologist Philip Kingsley. 'But hair only grows half an inch a month, so be patient. And always eat breakfast because the energy levels that feed your hair are at their lowest in the morning.' Try Pure Regrow (£29.95 for 60 capsules, 0870 7703861, on-group.co.uk) and Nourkrin Hair Recovery Tablets (£39.95 for 60, healthstore.uk.com).



Verdict: cure