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AGE WITH GRACE, NOT IN HASTE

Premature ageing has become a common concern in today's fast paced world, but some lifestyle changes can ensure youthfulness for longer

HT City · 11 Mar 2021 · 06 · Swati Chaturvedi swati.chaturvedi@hindustantimes.com

Age is inevitable, ageing isn't," said author Marv Levy. We can't reverse the natural ageing process. It's natural to experience fine lines, sun spots, wrinkles and hair loss as we advance in years. Unfortunately, in today's world, environmental and lifestyle factors make our bodies suffer the repercussions of ageing prematurely. Skin and hair are a mirror of what's going on inside our bodies and the effects of the environment one is exposed to. Changing climatic conditions, the degrading quality of produce, and even poor dietary habits significantly affect the way we look and feel.



Dr Rickson Pereira, a Mumbai-based dermatologist, says, "While ageing is a natural and an inevitable process, premature ageing has emerged as a widespread concern today. Unhealthy lifestyles, consumption of sugar laden and processed foods, nutrient-empty diets, stress and poor sleeping habits can accelerate ageing. Increasing exposure to Blue Light which is emitted by all digital devices has also been associated with accelerating the ageing process."

All of us have experienced that ache in the back, a dull face after a night of binge drinking, dry and flaky skin, and — the worst of all — people assuming you are older than you really are. "As we get older, the body's recovery processes slow down and there is progressive accumulation of damage over time. In skin, the signs of ageing can be seen in the form of hyperpigmentation like sun spots, loss of elasticity due to collagen breakdown, lacklustre skin. When these signs are evident sooner than expected, it is known as premature ageing. The most common factors responsible for

ageing are free radical damage, accumulation of advanced glycation end products, telomere shortening, and mutations," says Dr Ameesha Mahajan, celebrity dermatologist.

Depending on one's lifestyle, weather and genetics, the effects of ageing differ from person to person. Mumbai-based cosmetic dermatologist Dr Niketa Sonavane says, "Indian skin ages in a peculiar way. Dullness and dry skin are usually the first signs of premature ageing. Besides this, early signs are first visible around the eye area. This may come in the form of under eye dark circles, sunken eyes and crow's feet lines. Pigmentation and age spots start on the cheeks and nose around the same time."

Explaining the lifestyle and environmental issues that adversely impact the skin, Mahajan says, "The sun's UV rays damage the DNA in our skin cells and this leads to collagen breakdown, thus, causing dryness, loss of elasticity and wrinkles. Smoking also causes skin damage, by decreasing capillary blood flow to the skin, which, in turn, creates oxygen and nutrient deprivation in cutaneous tissues making the skin appear lustreless."

Dr Sonavane believes stress and poor sleep quality also slows down the skin's healing process. A diet that is loaded with sugar, refined carbohydrates and processed food causes oxidative stress and inflammation in the skin which also adds to the problem.

Premature ageing is taking over at a rapid rate, and while we cannot avoid these changes completely, there are ways to reduce the signs of ageing in your body — especially when you're not ready to embrace them.

Early signs of ageing usually show up around the eye area - dark circles, sunken eyes, crow's feet lines.

DR NIKETA SONAVANE, Cosmetic dermatologist