Healthy Ways to a Whiter Smile

Do you indulge in your one glass of antioxidant-packed red wine a night—and have the tooth stains to prove it? Food and drinks such as wine, coffee, cranberry juice, and mustard can dull even the brightest smiles. But before you reach for the drugstore whitening kit—which often is loaded with toxic ingredients that can weaken tooth enamel over time and make them even more susceptible to stains—look for these natural whiteners:

LOOK FOR	WHY?	FIND IT
Xylitol	This fermented sugar alcohol has been shown to prevent tooth decay by reducing bacteria in the mouth, which keeps plaque from forming. To reap its whitening benefits, chomp on xylitol chewing gum immediately after drinking red wine or coffee.	**ZappGum.** Packed with more xylitol per piece than most sugar-free gums, and available in five tasty flavors, this gum hardly feels like a stain-preventing chore. $14.99 for 12 12-piece packs; zappgum.com
Baking soda (sodium bicarbonate)	Just rubbing a bit of this pantry staple on your teeth twice a week (mix ¼ teaspoon with a dash of water, and use it like you would toothpaste) will help remove stains.	**Wine Wipes.** Packaged in a portable case, these wipes come saturated with baking soda, calcium, and glycerin to protect teeth from acid damage on the go. $18 for a three-pack; winewipes.com
Silica	This mineral, found in nature as quartz, works as a gentle abrasive to scrub stains off teeth.	**The Natural Dentist Healthy Teeth and Gums Whitening Plus Toothpaste.** This blend combines silica with antibacterial peppermint and sage oils. $7.99, 5 oz; thenaturaldentist.com

A Sweet Solution to Skin Woes

Sure, honey tastes great in tea or on a peanut butter sandwich, but it's also a powerful skin healer, says Christopher Watt, a licensed aesthetician and owner of Christopher Watt Esthetics in West Hollywood, California. Here are three recipes Watt uses to treat several famous faces, including Halle Berry and Jennifer Lopez:

FOR ACNE…

Honey's antibacterial properties kill the bacteria-laden sebum that causes zits. Use this cleansing honey wash every day.

Mix ¼ cup honey, 1 tablespoon liquid face soap, and ½ cup glycerin (available at drug and beauty stores).

FOR DRY SKIN…

Honey is a natural humectant; it attracts moisture to the skin and then helps retain it. Use the following moisturizer every day.

Mix 2 tablespoons honey, 2 tablespoons cocoa butter, 2 drops bergamont oil (optional), and 1 drop lavender oil (optional).

FOR PSORIASIS…

This chronic condition appears as inflamed and itchy patches of skin on the knees, elbows, hands, feet, scalp, or back, and this honey mask can help soothe the itchiness.

Mix ¼ cup honey and 1 crushed banana. Apply to damp skin, and leave on for 15 to 20 minutes. Remove with a damp cloth, pat dry, and apply moisturizer.

—JAYME OTTO