

Eating your five-a-day is the key to a sexy sun-kissed glow

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Forget sun beds, sunbathing and fake tanning lotions. The secret to a sexy, healthy glow lies in eating your five-a-day, reveals new breakthrough research from Taylor & Francis.

A new and innovative study recently published in *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology* sheds new light on the importance of skin colour as a determiner of [facial attractiveness](#). It also shows that carotenoid coloration has the upper hand over melanisation when it comes to the rules of attraction.

"Skin coloration can arise as a result of two distinct processes", explain the team leading the research: through tanning (melanisation) or the assimilation of fruit and vegetables (carotenoid ingestion).

While it is known that red and yellow pigments found in bright fruit and vegetables increase skin yellowness, recent studies have shown that "carotenoid coloration is a more important factor in healthy appearance than melanin coloration", clarify the academics.

Determined to investigate the importance of skin colour in judgements of facial attractiveness, as well as mate choices, in three separate, yet linked, Internet-based studies, the team set out to examine the importance of high levels of these pigments (carotenoids and melanin) in attraction choices.

Establishing the preference for one pigment over the other in judging the

appeal of a face was also crucial to the research.

In the first two studies, two separate groups of 60 participants were shown 27 base faces, specifically created for the purpose of testing. Through colour manipulation, the skin area of these composite faces was altered alongside the axis of carotenoid or melanin-associated derma colours.

High and low pigment versions of each face were shown in pairs to the partakers, who had to indicate which one they thought more attractive. Results from both studies showed a clear preference for strong colour values; 86% of the attendants to the first study voted for the high carotenoid version, while 78.5% of the participants to the second one opted for the high melanin variant.

But that was not all: in a third and final study, the team pitched 24 high carotenoid and high melanin faces against each other, asking attendants to choose the one deemed more appealing; results showed a 75.9% preference for carotenoid colouring over the melanin one.

This interesting research breaks new ground as it is the first to show strong evidence for the importance of skin coloration in attractiveness judgements. What's more, it clearly exposes "the importance of [carotenoid](#) coloration as a cue to current health and attractiveness, [a fact that] may be pivotal in mate choices", explain the team.

So, if eating too many carrots has worried you so far, it's time to think again. Turning orange may not be that bad, after all.

More information: "Fruit over sunbed: Carotenoid skin coloration is found more attractive than melanin coloration." Carmen E. Lefevrea* & David I. Perrettb. *The Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology*. [DOI: 10.1080/17470218.2014.944194](https://doi.org/10.1080/17470218.2014.944194)

Provided by Taylor & Francis

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