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Beauty and food connection gaining strength

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For people who want to optimize their healthy good looks, the nutrition prescription is fairly straightforward: Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and a moderate amount of good fats.

But if consumers were following that advice, there would be a run on Brussels sprouts and other such treats. So far no one's reported it.

It's more likely that shoppers are turning to specially formulated foods as beauty treatments. At least that's what manufacturers of sports drinks, breakfast bars and even chocolate bars are counting on.

The success of these new products may depend on their flavor, promotional buzz and the science behind the ingredients. Scientifically the concept may have some merit, according to dietitians who specialize in foods for beauty.

As a fashion model and chief executive officer of a company called thinkproducts, Ventura, Calif., Lizanne Falsetto understands the role proper nutrition plays in overall health and stamina. But she also knows that women wanted convenience, flavor and a relatively low calorie count in their snack choices.

"You can change your skin, hair, nails if you eat the right mix of nutrients," says Falsetto. "The problem is that people are on the go and it's hard to stop for a bowl of blueberries when you're on the expressway. We take the concept of powerful antioxidants and say eat these [bars] until you can get home for a balanced meal."

Her company produces bars including low-carbohydrate thinkThin bars, think5--which is the equivalent of five cups of fruits and vegetables--and the new thinkPink that benefits breast cancer research. The company recently introduced new flavors including blueberry and lemon sorbet.