

Looking Good with Collagen

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It seems that we all want to look younger. The key to a younger look is to help the body produce enough collagen to keep the skin vibrant. Collagen makes up 90% of the protein contained in skin cells. To gain collagen, my first thought would be to eat foods high in collagen, but then we have to remember that all proteins must be broken down into their component parts. After absorbing these component parts, the body reassembles them into its own proteins with identifying RNA and DNA. You cannot absorb collagen without first breaking it down. Any proteins absorbed or injected into the body will be attacked by the immune system and then an allergy can follow. That is how the immune system works. It is designed to recognize self and protect it and to recognize non-self and destroy it. All digestive proteins are broken down into chains of amino acids by hydrochloric acid in the stomach and then into individual amino acids by pancreatic enzymes in the intestines. Any unbroken down proteins would be acted upon by bacteria which results in a lot of gas and bloating.

Many people are saying that you should eat animal foods to obtain collagen. That makes sense in that collagen is broken down into proline and hydroxyl-proline. However, these two non-essential amino acids are synthesized by the body from essential amino acids. So, eating animal foods high in collagen is good but not necessary. When the body produces its own collagen, it needs these amino acids but also requires catalysts principally vitamin C, but also vitamin E, Zinc, sulfur, vitamin A and omega-3s.

To assure good vibrant skin through the abundance of collagen we suggest eating plenty of green leafy vegetables, citrus, bell peppers, berries, avocados, tomatoes, melons, mangos, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, garlic, broccoli and all other fresh raw produce. Stay away from isolated chemicals and junk food which is highly acidic and inflammatory. Let's help our bodies make plenty of collagen for beautiful skin by eating more nutrient dense fresh produce.

David Christopher is a Master Herbalist and the director of The School of Natural Healing. He also cohosts the popular radio show "A Healthier You" and is a popular international teacher and lecturer.