

Do collagen supplements really slow down the aging process?

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Collagen is one of the body's building blocks. Made from amino acids absorbed from the proteins we eat, there are more than 20 subtypes found everywhere - from bones and muscles to every organ. Types I, II and III are most common in skin, cartilage and connective tissue, providing strength and elasticity.

In recent years, collagen has been touted as the protein that keeps our faces looking youthful, with collagen powders and pills promising to slow the signs of aging – but are those claims true?

Dr Afshin Mosahebi, professor of plastic surgery at University College London, said the science was 'questionable', given the lack of large-scale, peer-reviewed studies.

" There is no direct evidence that collagen, taken alone, has any effect beyond getting enough protein ," says Mosahebi .

It's true that as we age, changes in collagen levels cause facial skin to start to look "wrinkled" and less firm, he says, but it's a mistake to think that simply taking collagen supplements is the solution. *" When you eat something, it doesn't go directly into your skin. Of course, some of it will eventually be absorbed and used to repair the skin, but it won't go straight from your mouth to your face and wrinkles ."*

He adds that using skin care products containing Collagen will also not make a lasting difference to the aging process, as "it **doesn't penetrate the skin itself** ."

Instead, he says the way we age depends on our genes (like having fair skin that is sensitive to the sun) and our lifestyle. His advice **for slowing that process includes making sure to eat a balanced diet that includes protein, staying out of the sun, avoiding smoking, staying hydrated, and keeping your skin hydrated with products like hyaluronic acid** .

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