

"Make each day your masterpiece."

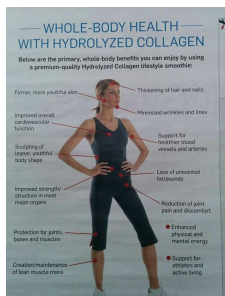
– **John Wooden**

How perfect is this quote? When I write my newsletters, not only do I want to choose a topic I think will interest you, but I also want to find a quote to inspire you. Ideas usually come to me when I'm in a quiet place and my mind is clear. This month, I was moved to start with something positive. What could be more positive than this wonderful quote from John Wooden? It's so easy to get caught up in the negativity around us, but the reality is, how we see it is ultimately in our control. My dad used to say, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade." The idea was to always make the best of what seems to be a bad situation. It puts the control back into your hands. A positive attitude gives you the power over your circumstances, (whatever they may be) instead of letting your circumstances have power over you. Remember, eventually, every storm will run out of rain and many storms ultimately give us rainbows. So instead of wallowing in whatever is bothering you on any particular day, focus on making every single day of your life your very own masterpiece.

Yours in health,

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The Importance of Collagen



As you all know, my focus is always on getting and staying well naturally. I typically prefer to try something before recommending it. Sometimes, I learn about something that's so exciting I share it before I try it, but that's the exception rather than the rule. It's not the case here. Collagen is a super important nutrient and I started supplementing with it about a year ago (thanks to my best friend). Since that time, I've noticed quite a few positive changes in my body....both inside and out. If you want specific details, reach out and I'll be happy to share my experience with it.

What exactly is collagen? It's the most prevalent protein in our body. It makes up the connective tissues in our skin, muscles, tendons and ligaments. It gives our bones their strength and our skin its structure.

Why is collagen important? Our body needs it for a plethora of reasons, but here's the problem: Once we become old enough to buy alcohol at the age of 21, our body starts producing 12% LESS collagen every decade. So essentially, by the time we hit middle age, we're making about 50% less collagen than we did when we were teenagers. Even though we're making less each decade, we still need it. Plus, things like smoking, stress, pollution and a bad diet can further impact our body's ability to produce it.

What happens when we don't get enough? Over time and as we get older, less collagen means we'll start to notice the following:

- Thinner hair
- Weak and brittle nails
- Sagging skin and wrinkles
- Stiff and aching joints
- Issues with digestion
- Longer recovery times from exercise

While I knew collagen was important and thought I knew quite a bit about this vital protein, I was surprised to learn that there are a total of 28 different types. Of those, five are the most important. So if you decide to add collagen to your daily diet, you need to be able to choose wisely and select one that will provide the most benefit. Here are the 5 important types:

1. Type I – We have the most of this one, which is essential for healthy skin, bones, digestion, organs and tendons.
2. Type II – This is mainly needed for cartilage.
3. Type III- This one is usually found along with Type I...they kind of go hand in hand. It helps give our skin its elasticity (so it appears more firm and wrinkle free) and also strengthen helps our blood vessels and heart tissue.
4. Type V – This one is important for good skin and healthy hair.
5. Type X – This one is especially important for overall bone health and bone formation.

How do we get more collagen into our diet? The latest craze is with bone broth. It's everywhere now, but it probably isn't the best choice for collagen-containing products. While it's definitely good for you, it doesn't break down collagen's proteins very well. This is a problem because that makes it harder to digest. If it's not properly digested, your body can't reap as many of its benefits. Plus, bone broth only gives you collagen from one source.....the most popular of which are chicken and beef. The other issue with bone broth is that many people don't like the taste. In addition, it's tough to add it to other things you're consuming. You can buy a high-quality collagen powder and easily add it to anything. Personally, I put 2 scoops of collagen powder into my morning protein shake, but have also added it to coffee or tea, and even oatmeal, to ensure I get my daily dose. The powdered form of collagen is simple to use. Plus, It would be pretty weird and taste pretty awful to put bone broth in my coffee!

Are there any other foods besides bone broth that contain collagen? Yes! You can look to chicken, fish and shellfish, gelatin, egg whites and organ meats (yuk!). There are also several foods that can help your body to synthesize collagen. These include pumpkin seeds, garlic, mushrooms, citrus fruits, berries, leafy greens and my least favorite food, tomatoes. Please note that Vitamin C is crucial for helping the body synthesize collagen. Vitamin C actually offers numerous health benefits of its own.

If you're going to supplement, hydrolyzed collagen is the most easily absorbable.

Are there any other benefits of collagen? Recent studies have shown that it may be helpful in stalling the metastasis of cancer. Dr. Matthias Rath, a German physician and the founder of Cellular Medicine, found that cancer cells seem to spread because of a weak extracellular matrix (ECM). The reason is because cancer cells must break through the ECM before they can metastasize. Collagen is one of the main proteins that hold the ECM together. Not having enough collagen will allow cancer cells break through the ECM and to spread. Having enough collagen is almost like a bullet-proof vest to the cancer cells. It certainly appears to be a simple first-line of defense to put up a good fight and protect you.

I'm excited that something so easy to add to our diet can do so much good to help us as we age. I'll close out with a fun fact about collagen. There's a little-known tiny catfish, a three-striped Cory, which lives in the Amazon River. It's only about an inch or two long, but is not afraid of the scary piranha with its razor-sharp teeth. Can you guess why the little Cory can survive the piranha's bite seemingly unscathed? The reason is that its scales are super tough because they contain collagen (as well as other minerals). In a head-to-head test between the two fish, the piranha had to bite down an average of 8 times to just put a dent in the Cory's tail armor. When it tried to break through the Cory's abdominal armor, it was only successful 20% of the time, with an average of having to inflict 10 bites before it was able to puncture its armor.

I think that's an incredible example of how important collagen is to our body!

Have a wonderful month!