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13 FOODS THAT BOOST COLLAGEN PRODUCTION

by Sarah Turner and Brenda Walding, DPT, FDN-P
Today, we understand the inner workings of our bodies more than ever before, and scientists are continuing to unlock the secrets of keeping our youthful vigor longer.

Gone are the days when we must simply give in to the wear and tear of time. With new health insights, we can fight back against aging.

What is one of the best anti-aging, health-promoting discoveries to date? **Collagen.**

The most abundant protein in your body, collagen is needed for hundreds of vital bodily functions.

**Do you want smoother skin? Healthier nails and hair? Balanced hormones and mood? Less cellulite? What about a healthy heart and better athletic performance?**
Collagen has been found to scientifically support each of those benefits ... and more!

**Stronger than steel,** collagen comprises a third of the total protein in your body. Collagen is used throughout your body like glue to hold together your skin, muscles, corneas, blood vessels, bones, tendons, and cartilage. Appropriately, the word “collagen” derives from the Greek word for glue, *kólla.*

Your body contains more than 16 different types of collagen, but type 1 makes up 90 percent of your body’s total collagen. This type is crucial for skin vitality and is believed to be the strongest of all.

**Other significant types of collagen include:**

- **Type 2:** Important for healthy joints and cartilage.
- **Type 3:** Vital for heart health and strong blood vessels.
- **Type 4:** Creates protective layers around organs.
- **Type 5:** Found in hair, skin, and placentas of pregnant women.
- **Type 10:** Needed for repairing bones and joints.

Collagen holds together so many critical pieces of your health. Without it, your body would begin to fall apart, which is what can happen as you age.
The Undeniable Benefits of Collagen

Some of the top science-backed benefits of collagen include:

• supports a healthy gut and digestion\(^3,4\)
• balances your hormones\(^5\)
• helps you sleep better\(^6\)
• strengthens your joints\(^7\)
• speeds up recovery time\(^8\)
• improves hair and nails\(^9\)
• reduces wrinkles and smooths skin\(^10,11\)
• boosts your metabolism and aids with weight loss\(^12\)
• encourages bone growth and prevents bone loss\(^13\)
• enhances athletic performance\(^14\)
• supports healthy teeth and gums\(^15\)
• detoxes your liver\(^16\)
• reduces cellulite\(^17\)
• balances your mood\(^18\)
• protects your heart and arteries\(^19\)
• builds and repairs muscles\(^20\)

Collagen is jam-packed with benefits! Fortunately, you can support your body’s natural need for collagen by protecting its stores and boosting its production.

Support Your Body’s Collagen

As you get older, your body naturally decreases its collagen production. On top of reduced collagen creation, your existing collagen begins to break down. As your body produces less collagen and breaks down existing collagen, symptoms of aging such as wrinkles, injury susceptibility, and weakening of the heart and arteries occur.
You can support your body's natural collagen stores by not smoking; avoiding too much sun (for adequate vitamin D levels, do try to get about 20 minutes a day); and eliminating sugar, ultra-processed foods, and refined carbohydrates from your diet.

Additionally, you can boost your collagen production and stores by consuming collagen and foods that boost collagen production.

We want you to look and feel your best. We believe collagen is one of the easiest and most effective ways to accomplish this, which is why we’ve compiled this report.

Each of these foods plays a role either in collagen production or preventing collagen degradation—and sometimes they achieve both!

Let's look at delicious foods you can incorporate into your diet today to give your body a fighting chance at keeping your youthful vigor for years to come.

1. CITRUS FRUITS

**YOUR BODY** needs ample levels of vitamin C to produce collagen. Clinical studies have found the use of vitamin C both orally and topically can boost your collagen production. Citrus such as oranges and grapefruits contain almost all the vitamin C you need in a day. Due to the wonderful benefits of vitamin C, many physicians believe it’s better to consume more than the daily recommended intake of around 90 milligrams. You can take up to 2,000 mg of vitamin C per day, but any more may cause diarrhea and nausea. As always, go slow and be sure to listen to your body.

Even though citrus gets all the credit for being the highest in vitamin C, you'll also find high levels of vitamin C in many dark green vegetables like kale. On top of your citrus intake, we recommend eating kale, broccoli, and brussels sprouts.
2. **BANANAS**

**BANANAS ARE** high in silica, which is needed for optimum collagen production and stabilization. Silica is vital for your skin and hair, not only because it’s needed for collagen synthesis but also because it activates enzymes that help keep your skin elastic. Especially beneficial for type 1 collagen creation, silica has been shown to prevent and treat post-menopausal osteoporosis.

Bananas contain far more silica than any other food—coming in at 13 mg per banana—but other contenders include raisins, mineral water, green beans, and carrots.

3. **BROCCOLI**

**BROCCOLI FLORETS** contains sulforaphane, a powerful protector against sun damage to the collagen in your skin. Sulforaphane also works as an antioxidant and anti-aging agent in your skin. It’s important to boost collagen production and protect your collagen stores since the latter naturally degrade as you age.

In addition to broccoli, other cruciferous vegetables high in sulforaphane include cauliflower, brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, and bok choy. An added bonus is that cruciferous vegetables are known as a chemopreventive against cancer. Load up on these veggies because they pack a healthy punch against aging from several angles.
4. ALOE VERA

**DIRECT APPLICATION** of aloe vera has long been used to aid the skin with healing from burns and wounds, but there’s also evidence suggesting aloe vera is great for the skin when consumed.

Aloe vera is rich in a polysaccharide called glucomannan, which is known for increasing collagen synthesis when taken orally or applied topically.28

One double-blind study found women who took aloe vera supplements saw a significant increase in collagen production and a reduction in facial wrinkles.29 Aloe vera is available as a juice in most health food and grocery stores.

5. GINSENG

**THANKS TO** its wrinkle-fighting properties, ginseng has long been recognized as a helpful anti-aging supplement.30 Ginseng also contributes to your skin’s health by boosting collagen production, specifically type I31—the most abundant form in your body and possibly the most important collagen type for reducing wrinkles.

Ginseng is available in most health food stores in the form of a supplement. You can also cook with ginseng, adding it to soups and stews. It has a spicy, bitter flavor with earthy undertones.
6. AVOCADO

It seems as though avocado makes it onto nearly every health food list, and this is no exception. In one study, collagen synthesis was increased when avocado oil was consumed by rats. There was a dramatic increase in collagen found in rats who ate avocado oil compared to those who had either soybean oil or no added oil to their diets.

Luckily, adding avocado to your diet is easy and delicious! Try this Creamy Guacamole recipe if you're looking for an easy and tasty way to eat more avocados. This healthy snack is simple to prepare and always a hit with guests.

7. CILANTRO

Cilantro is high in vitamin C and linolenic acid, both of which are known for boosting collagen production. Studies have found linolenic acid boosts type 1 collagen production on a molecular level.

Furthermore, linolenic acids found in cilantro have been shown to prevent photoaging (sun damage) and depletion of existing collagen. High in antioxidants, cilantro captures free radicals in your body, further preventing damage.

Those who don’t enjoy the taste of cilantro can take it in supplement form.
8. CHLORELLA AND SPIRULINA

CHLORELLA AND spirulina are algae that have been making frequent appearances on health and beauty lists due to their wide-ranging benefits—including antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antitumor, and neuroprotective properties. Algae also increase type 1 procollagen (a precursor to collagen) and prevent the degradation of collagen.¹⁴

Chlorella and spirulina are two of the most nutrient-dense superfoods you can consume. They are rich in vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and chlorophyll. Both come in the form of a green powder that can be easily added to a smoothie.

9. DARK LEAFY GREENS

CHLOROPHYLL IS the group of pigments that give vegetables their green color. Dark leafy greens such as kale, arugula, spinach, and lettuce all contain chlorophyll and are nutrient-dense. Packed with folate, fibers, carotenoids, vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants, dark leafy greens are one of the best foods you can add to your diet for better health.

Chlorophyll is also great for collagen production and wrinkle reduction. In one study, chlorophyll supplements improved the production of type 1 collagen in women over 45 and reduced visible wrinkles significantly.³⁵

Anyone hoping to boost their collagen production and improve the appearance of their skin should consume dark leafy greens. They offer so many benefits, it’s a good idea to work them into your food as opposed to trying to get the same benefits from supplements.
10. POMEGRANATE SEEDS AND BERRIES

POMEGRANATE SEEDS

and berries such as strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, and raspberries contain ellagic acid, which has been shown to prevent collagen breakdown. These little guys are also high in vitamin C, which as you know is needed for collagen production.36

Additionally, berries are rich in anthocyanins—antioxidants that protect your collagen against degradation.37 Anthocyanins are what give berries their rich and beautiful colors. Beyond aiding in collagen synthesis and preservation, berries are excellent for your overall health and fight unwanted signs of aging.

11. BELL PEPPERS

SURPRISING TO some, bell peppers are one of the best sources of vitamin C. A single cup of bell peppers contains 317 percent of your recommended daily value of vitamin C.38

Bell peppers are also high in beta-carotene, which your body converts to vitamin A and uses in collagen production.39 So load up on those colorful and crunchy peppers!

Eating peppers raw yields more nutrients and natural enzymes than if they are cooked.40 Try dipping some mini sweet peppers in the Creamy Guacamole we mentioned above for a double health bonus!
12. GRASS-FED BEEF

GRASS-FED BEEF is high in lysine and proline, vital amino acids used in collagen production. Lysine is considered an essential amino acid, meaning your body needs it but cannot create it on its own. Because your body cannot produce lysine, the recommended daily intake is around 2,000 mg a day—less than what a quarter pound of beef typically contains.

Make sure you get plenty of amino acids because they are the building blocks of all proteins in your body, including collagen. Other great sources of proline include eggs and cabbage. You can find lysine in turkey, chicken, and eggs.

13. BONE BROTH

BONE BROTH is the only item on this list that actually contains collagen itself. It is rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. With high vitamin C and selenium levels, Bone Broth even helps your body create its own collagen.

Bone Broth is also packed with glutamine, proline, and glycine—amino acids necessary for all protein production throughout your body. Bone Broth is one of the few foods you can consume that directly adds more collagen to your diet (besides supplements). Many health food stores have started adding Bone Broth to their offerings in response to the growing awareness of collagen importance.
What About Collagen Supplements?

**Despite our** efforts, most of us are not getting enough collagen in our diets and should add collagen supplements in addition to eating more collagen-boosting foods.

The combination of collagen supplements with collagen-boosting foods helps ensure you have adequate collagen levels to fight the impacts of aging and to optimize your health. As you’ve learned, collagen is a powerful tool for maintaining healthy skin, hair, joints, and muscles.

In most cases, our bodies are not producing sufficient levels of collagen. This is because we don’t eat the entire animal from nose to tail like our ancestors did. The modern diet doesn’t include Bone Broth, cooked-down bone, marrow, and cartilage.

It’s understandable why we aren’t getting enough collagen. Parts like gristle aren’t appealing to most of us, and we don’t tend to eat stews as much as our predecessors did. Additionally, some people’s bodies don’t produce sufficient collagen. Studies have found people are genetically predisposed to having differing levels of collagen production.42.

Due to the wide-ranging benefits of collagen, it’s wise to add it to your daily routine.
CHOOSING THE RIGHT COLLAGEN FOR BEAUTY & HEALTH

WHY WOULDN'T you add collagen supplements to your diet? It’s hard to turn down benefits such as improving your mood, promoting a healthy gut, balancing your hormones, recovering faster from injuries, enjoying better sleep, and reducing wrinkles!

The importance of collagen is undeniable—it's the justifiable reason behind the recent hype in the health and wellness world.

But remember, just like any concentrated health product, it's crucial to make sure you're getting the best quality.

Collagen comes from different sources, including cow, chicken, fish, and eggs. Grass-fed beef collagen is the best source we've found by far.

This is because grass-fed beef collagen is the top source of types 1 and 3.

Type 1 and 3 collagens make up 90 percent of all the collagen in your body. They are vital building blocks for healthy skin, eyes, hair, nails, teeth, gums, tendons, bones, ligaments, and blood vessels.

Type 1 collagen is the most abundant and strongest collagen in your body. It’s critical for healing injuries and gives your skin the elasticity it needs to stay wrinkle-free and prevent tearing.

Usually found in combination with type 1, type 3 collagen is vital to strengthening your cardiovascular system. It protects your heart and arteries, keeping you fit and healthy internally.

Grass-fed beef collagen is also high in glycine, an amino acid needed in building and maintaining the integrity of your DNA and RNA.

Rich in proline—another important amino acid—grass-fed beef collagen encourages your body to boost its own natural collagen production.
Because we understand the important role collagen plays in nearly every aspect of health, we’ve developed **Native Path Collagen Protein**. A collagen supplement of the highest quality, **Native Path Collagen Protein** is an excellent source of collagen as well as protein.

We want you to be able to increase your collagen and protein intake easily. Packed with type 1 and type 3 collagen, **Native Path Collagen Protein** powder may help slow aging impacts; build muscles; repair damage; and improve skin, joint health, and more!
Resources

5. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1215839/
8. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3081477/
10. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4206255/
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