

IN THE KNOW ABOUT NUTRITION

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Collagen Supplements

Collagen supplements are some of the freshest faces in the nutrition supplement game; their benefits being related to muscle, joint, and skin health, but **what is collagen exactly?**

Collagen is a structural protein found in the body in places like bones, tendons, cartilage, blood vessels, skin, and hair. Its main function is to hold things together. Collagen provides strength and structure.

The body can make collagen through various processes; however, our bodies make less as we age. A dramatic dip in collagen production occurs after age 20. A reduction in collagen may lead to delayed wound healing, joint pain, and sagging skin. Foods we eat can have some influence on our body's rate of collagen production. Foods that help stimulate collagen synthesis in the body include:

- Bone broth
- Leafy greens
- Eggs (specifically egg whites)
- Citrus fruits
- Berries

What are the potential benefits?

Skin: Collagen plays a role in strengthening the skin and may benefit skin elasticity and hydration, especially as you age. In some studies, the use of collagen supplements has been shown to reduce wrinkles and dryness.

Joints: Collagen has also been shown to alleviate joint pain as it functions to help maintain the integrity of protective cartilage that cushions joints. Collagen supplements may help improve symptoms of osteoarthritis (a condition that weakens the joints) and reduce inflammation.

Muscles: Muscle tissue is composed in part by collagen. Supplementing collagen may promote an increase in muscle mass and strength by stimulating creatine synthesis which promotes muscle growth after exercise.

Many other benefits of collagen are proposed including the promotion of *heart* health, prevention of *bone* loss, increased strength of *hair and nails*, and improved *mood*.

Should I Supplement?

Collagen supplements are also widely available for use. They can come in the form of powders, capsules, and gummies. Intake of collagen supplements has the potential benefit of stimulating the body to produce collagen on its own.

Current research as found no risks associated with collagen supplementation. It is generally believed safe for supplementation, but benefits are likely to vary by persons and age groups. Supplements are widely available at places like supermarkets with whole health sections, specialty drug stores or health food stores.

These stores have staff people who are available and equipped to help you choose what supplement is best for you. Collagen is often marketed in types and labeled Type I, Type II, Type III and etc. Some of the various types have target benefits as listed below:

- Type I & III: promotes skin elasticity and hair strength
- Type II: promotes joint and cartilage health

You may see other ‘types’ marketed as there are 28 types of collagen proteins in total. If you are unfamiliar with a type or have questions, be sure to utilize the help of a nearby staff person—they are trained to have answers!

If you are interested in learning more about supplement ingredients, grading, and efficacy check out online resources at:

- <https://labdoor.com/>
- <https://examine.com/>
- <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/list-all/>

We can see that collagen has a wide range of potential benefits. Aim to consume a variety of foods rich in collagen-producing elements and consider supplementation for an added boost. Be sure to check with your doctor or Pharmacist about drug to drug and food and drug interactions before beginning any new supplements or adding foods you have not normally consumed. For example some leafy greens can interact with blood thinners.

Resources:

<https://www.vitalproteins.com/pages/types-of-collagen-which-collagen-should-i-take>

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/collagen-benefits#section9>

<https://www.womenshealthmag.com/health/a19995031/collagen-supplements/>

Fresh Spinach Salad

- 1 bunch fresh spinach
- 2 hard-cooked eggs, grated
- 1 purple onion, sliced
- 6 green onions, sliced
- Sunflower seeds
- Ripe olives, sliced
- 1 carrot, grated
- ½ lb. Bacon, cooked and crumbled
- Fresh mushrooms, sliced
- Croutons
- Oil and vinegar dressing

Mix ingredients and toss with dressing.

Citrus and Spinach Salad

- ½ cup grapefruit juice
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- ½ cup virgin olive oil
- ½ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds
- 2 tablespoons onion, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon salt (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 cups spinach leaves washed and trimmed
- 2 cans (11 ozs. ea) mandarin oranges
- 1 cup grapefruit sections
- ½ cup red onion rings

Combine juice, mustard, olive oil, honey, poppy seeds, onion, salt and pepper; chill. Combine remaining ingredients. At serving time, drizzle dressing over salad and toss to combine.