

Is collagen or hyaluronic acid more important for skin?

Collagen and hyaluronic acid are words that may sound like magic. They can do things for your skin, but it all seems very complicated. Is one better than the other? Can bad things happen to your skin if you make the wrong choice? Let's get rid of skin worries by sorting it out.

Collagen or hyaluronic acid?

Maybe you have started worrying about your skin. It might have become a bit dry and dull – or perhaps you are worried that it will become dry and dull because that's happened to older family members.

Or you might be stressed by the fact that your skin has started looking slightly thinner and saggy. Alternatively, you are worried that your skin will look like that in the future because older relatives of yours have sagging skin.

There are both skincare products and aesthetic treatments that aim at increasing the amount of hyaluronic acid or collagen in the skin to rejuvenate it. However, can they do anything about the skin issues mentioned and when should you use what?

Two important components of the skin

Collagen and hyaluronic acid are both important components of the skin and they both decrease in the skin as we age.[1]

However, hyaluronic acid and collagen are very different and have different functions in the skin. Once you have a basic understanding of them you will have a fairly good idea what's most important for your skin, if you are considering investing in skincare or aesthetic treatments.

Hyaluronic acid: a water-binding molecule

Hyaluronic acid is a type of sugar molecule in the skin that binds lots of water. You could liken it to a cotton wad that is soaked in water. It helps hydrating the skin and other body tissues. Hyaluronic acid is constantly broken down and reformed in the body.[2]

Because of its hydrating effect, skincare products and aesthetic treatments with hyaluronic acid are marketed to people of all ages to improve the skin's hydrobalance[3], as dry skin can affect both younger and older people.

Collagen: a protein that provides structure to the skin

Collagen is a protein that gives structure to the skin.[4] You could liken it to the building frames in a house.

The collagen in the skin lasts for many years but will eventually decrease and become more disorganized – the collagen content in the skin decreases by about 1% per year.[1] The loss of collagen leads to saggy and loose skin.[5,6]

Loss of skin firmness isn't usually an issue until we are in our 40s. That means that collagen stimulating treatments are often suitable for people who have reached this age but generally not for younger people.[7]

What can you do to increase hyaluronic acid or collagen in the skin?

A good start could be to try skincare products. Many skincare products contain hyaluronic acid and are marketed as a means to improve skin hydration.[8]

There are also skincare products that can increase skin collagen. For example, creams that contain retinol (vitamin A) can help increase collagen in the skin.[1]

For those who have tried skincare and think the effect wasn't strong enough there are aesthetic treatments offered at clinics. Here we will take a look at two injectable treatments, Restylane® Skinboosters™ and the

collagen stimulator Sculptra®.

What product is skinboosters?

Skinboosters are aesthetic treatments where hyaluronic acid is injected into the skin to restore the skin's hydrobalance.[3]

As mentioned above, natural hyaluronic acid in the body is constantly broken down and reformed. The hyaluronic acid in skinboosters has therefore been stabilized, using specific technologies, to maintain the effect for a long period of time.[3]

Restylane Skinboosters is a versatile treatment that has been shown improve skin hydration[9-12] as well as other skin aspects such as skin elasticity[9-13] skin radiance and glow.[9,11,14]

The results from a treatment program with Restylane Skinboosters last up to 15 months.[9,12,15]

If you are considering this type of treatment, you should consult a qualified healthcare practitioner. Skinboosters are minimally invasive treatments, but all aesthetic treatments have potential side effects. Your healthcare practitioner will discuss side effects and expected treatment results in your specific case.

What are collagen stimulators?

Collagen stimulators work by stimulating the skin to produce more of its own collagen.[16]

The collagen stimulator Sculptra contains a unique plant-based and biocompatible substance called PLLA-SCA that works deep within the skin.[16]

Sculptra has been shown to increase collagen type 1 in the skin by as much as 66.5%.[17] It increases skin firmness and delays the normal course of skin sagging.[18]

Collagen stimulating treatments with Sculptra have also been shown to have other skin rejuvenation effects such as improved skin hydration and elasticity.[19]

As mentioned above, collagen in the body is quite long-lasting. Treatment programs with Sculptra can provide a sustained effect for more than 2 years.[17,20-22]

Like skinboosters, Sculptra is considered a minimally invasive treatment, but there are of course potential side effects with this aesthetic treatment too. You should only consult healthcare practitioners that are qualified for this type of treatment. They will inform you if a treatment program with Sculptra may be suitable for you and will discuss potential side effects.

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