Hyaluronic acid vs collagen – What’s best?

Which one is best if you want glowing skin?

Which is better, hyaluronic acid or collagen for your skin? Both are used in various ways to rejuvenate and improve the look of our skin – in skincare, food supplements and aesthetic treatments. But which one is best if you want glowing skin? Or if you'd like to look younger? Or even to reduce sagging skin? Hyaluronic acid vs collagen – what's really best for you?

Hyaluronic acid vs collagen – their respective roles in the skin

One is not more important than the other as they are both fundamental building blocks of the skin:

- Hyaluronic acid is a kind of carbohydrate, a sugar molecule, that can bind large amounts of water. It's key to skin moisture.
- Collagen is a protein that is organized in a matrix in the skin. This matrix, or scaffold, provides structural support for the skin.

So, one substance provides support and shape and the other keeps the skin hydrated.

Hyaluronic acid vs collagen – the aging process

With age or due to external factors, the content of both hyaluronic acid and collagen will decrease in the skin, which can make the skin thinner, sagging and less hydrated:

- In aging skin, the hyaluronic acid content of the skin decreases. In the epidermis (the outer layer) it will eventually disappear entirely. In the dermis (the deeper layer), the content will more or less be the same, but in older skin the hyaluronic acid will have a diminished ability to bind water and keep the skin hydrated.[1]

- As we age, the collagen matrix becomes fragmented and less new collagen is produced. Existing collagen breaks down at a higher rate than in a young person’s skin.[2] This means that we enter a vicious circle with a faster breakdown and slower regeneration of collagen.

Environmental factors such as UV or inflammation can also add to the reduced content of hyaluronic acid and collagen in the skin.[1,2]

Which is better, hyaluronic acid or collagen? Treatment options for different age groups

As a first step, many of us might try skincare or food supplements to improve the look of our skin. If these methods don’t give us the results we want, there are also aesthetic treatments that can help increase the hyaluronic acid and collagen content in our skin. But which is better?

- Both young and old can suffer from dehydrated skin. Some of us feel the symptoms get better when using skincare products that target dry skin or by changing our diet. There are also aesthetic treatments that deposit “reservoirs” of hyaluronic acid in the skin, called skinboosters, if we need more help.[3,4]
- The collagen in our skin is very stable. It takes about 30 years for it to be replaced.[2] That's why young people don’t have many noticeable signs of collagen loss, such as sagging skin. A collagen stimulating aesthetic treatment can therefore be more suitable for those who have reached their 40s and 50s, depending on the advice from the treating healthcare practitioner.

So, which is better, hyaluronic acid or collagen, depends on many things, such as our age and how much help we need to solve our problems.

Hyaluronic acid vs collagen – injectable aesthetic treatments

Here are examples of injectable treatments that can help increase the amount of hyaluronic acid and collagen in the skin:

Restylane® SKINBOOSTERS™

Restylane® SKINBOOSTERS™ helps increase skin hydration and elasticity.[3-5] The treatment usually consists of 2-3 sessions where micro particles of stabilized hyaluronic acid are injected into the skin.

Why stabilized? Hyaluronic acid breaks down fast in the body so to make the effect last longer, the hyaluronic acid in Restylane® SKINBOOSTERS™ has been slightly modified, stabilized, to prolong the duration.

In addition to improving skin hydration and elasticity, Restylane® SKINBOOSTERS™ makes the skin smoother and more radiant.[6] Results can be seen up to 12 months after the initial treatment.[3,7]

Sculptra®

Sculptra® stimulates the skin's own natural collagen production. The treatment generally consists of three sessions where microspheres of a substance called PLLA (poly-L-lactic acid) is injected into the skin. Over several months, the PLLA microspheres will gradually stimulate collagen regeneration.[8-10]

The PLLA will be broken down by the body after some time, but the new collagen will remain. A study has shown that Sculptra® can increase the skin collagen content by as much as 66.5%.[9]

Results from a Sculptra® treatment are firmer, fuller skin and improvements can last up to 25 months.[11,12]

Which is better, hyaluronic acid or collagen according to healthcare practitioners

Treatments with Restylane® SKINBOOSTERS™ and Sculptra® are only performed by qualified healthcare practitioners. They will know which is better, hyaluronic acid or collagen in your specific case or if you are better helped with another treatment.

Other options than hyaluronic acid vs collagen

Today there are many kinds of aesthetic procedures that can help give us a younger look or feel more comfortable with our skin. Could these kinds of injectable treatments even replace surgery? **Read more in this article.**

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