What Collagen Does to Your Skin During Menopause Transcript

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Why Collagen Changes in Menopause

Studies show that that up to 30% of skin collagen can be lost during the first 5 years after menopause. Here's skin collagen can be lost during the first 5 years after menopause. Here's what this means for you.

what this means for you. Welcome to my channel. I'm Dr. Elizabeth. I'm Dr. Elizabeth Trattner, a Trattner, a licensed licensed naturopathic doctor practicing naturopathic doctor practicing here in sunny here in sunny Arizona. And before we Arizona. And before we begin, a big thank you to begin, a big thank you to everyone who signed up.

everyone who signed up. I see all your I see all your comments. I read comments. I read each of them and am very each of them and am very happy to communicate with happy to communicate with you. I constantly you. I constantly observe in my observe in my patients how patients how skin and joint changes skin and joint changes occur occur occur simultaneously. And simultaneously. And most women most women never get never get an explanation for why they are an explanation for why they are connected. So by the connected. So by the end of this video, you'll end of this video, you'll know the three know the three main functions of main functions of collagen for skin, collagen for skin, joints, and something joints, and something most women most women don't even don't even think about. We'll think about. We'll start with what start with what collagen does for collagen does for the skin, and why the the skin, and why the research results are more complicated than you've been told.

than you've been told. Then let's talk about Then let's talk about joints, which often joints, which often comes as a surprise comes as a surprise to many women. And the to many women. And the third point is the third point is the connection that connection that ties it all ties it all together. This is something that no together. This is something that no one talks about, and that's why one talks about, and that's why I wanted to make I wanted to make this video. Stay this video. Stay with me until the third with me until the third point. That's when the whole point. That's when the whole picture becomes clear.

What Collagen Does for Your Skin

Let's start with the benefit Let's start with the benefit most people most people associate with collagen— your skin. I want your skin. I want to tell you what the research actually shows, because it's research actually shows, because it's not as simple as " take collagen and get better skin." Collagen is the main Collagen is the main structural protein of structural protein of your skin. It is he who your skin. It is he who gives the skin gives the skin elasticity, elasticity, elasticity, hydration and hydration and elasticity.

elasticity. As your body's natural As your body's natural production production production slows down, you slows down, you may notice that your may notice that your skin becomes thinner, skin becomes thinner, drier, and less drier, and less elastic than before.

Here's what researchers think is actually happening. actually happening. Collagen peptides Collagen peptides appear to signal appear to signal fibroblasts— fibroblasts— the cells the cells responsible for responsible for making new making new collagen— collagen— to speed up to speed up to speed up production. Think of production. Think of fibroblasts as a fibroblasts as a construction crew.

construction crew. Collagen peptides are workers who are workers who work a few work a few extra shifts. A study A study published in the published in the journal Nutrients journal Nutrients found that found that oral oral oral collagen peptides were collagen peptides were associated with significant associated with significant improvements in improvements in skin hydration and elasticity skin hydration and elasticity compared to placebo compared to placebo over 12 weeks.

Now the part that is Now the part that is important to me as a important to me as a clinician. Not clinician. Not all of these studies are of all of these studies are of equal quality.

Samples are often Samples are often small, and several small, and several trials were trials were funded by the funded by the supplement manufacturers themselves. This is worth supplement manufacturers themselves. This is worth voicing, not just voicing, not just ignoring. A 2023 systematic review, which included 2023 systematic review, which included 26 studies and over 26 studies and over 1,700 participants, found an 1,700 participants, found an overall positive overall positive trend, but also trend, but also pointed to risks of pointed to risks of bias in a bias in a significant proportion of these significant proportion of these studies. So what does this studies. So what does this mean for you in mean for you in practice? Collagen practice? Collagen can be a useful can be a useful support, not a support, not a stand-alone stand-alone stand-alone solution to problems.

solution to problems. Hydration, Hydration, Hydration, sun protection, and overall sun protection, and overall nutrition are still of the nutrition are still of the utmost utmost utmost importance. In importance. In naturopathic naturopathic naturopathic medicine, we always medicine, we always come back to come back to this. First, this. First, build the foundation.

Sun protection and Sun protection and collagen supplementation collagen supplementation complement this complement this foundation, not foundation, not replace it. So, replace it. So, what should you pay what should you pay attention to? Skin that attention to? Skin that feels slightly more feels slightly more hydrated or hydrated or slightly less dry to the slightly less dry to the touch after 8–12 touch after 8–12 weeks of regular weeks of regular use. These are use. These are not instant changes at all. Everyone not instant changes at all. Everyone believes that collagen is believes that collagen is needed specifically for the needed specifically for the skin. But here's what skin. But here's what most people don't even most people don't even expect. Before I expect. Before I get to the topic of get to the topic of joints, because I know that's what joints, because I know that's what many of you many of you came here for, came here for, take a second and take a second and like like like this video. This this video. This really helps. And really helps. And if you haven't if you haven't subscribed yet, please subscribe. I subscribe.

The Joint Benefit Most Women Do Not Expect

I cover cover cover research on hormones, health, skin, and, health, skin, and joints every week. Okay, joints every week. Okay, let's talk let's talk about joints. Collagen is about joints. Collagen is n't just found in n't just found in your skin. It your skin. It is also the main is also the main building building building block of cartilage—the tissue that tissue that cushions your cushions your joints. And this is where the joints. And this is where the research gets research gets really interesting. Your really interesting. Your cartilage relies on a cartilage relies on a collagen-rich collagen-rich matrix to matrix to remain elastic remain elastic during everyday during everyday stress and movement.

Collagen peptides Collagen peptides can help can help stimulate the cells stimulate the cells that build this matrix, called, called chondrocytes, to chondrocytes, to maintain it. Think of the maintain it. Think of the cartilage matrix as the cartilage matrix as the underlayment under a underlayment under a rug. As it gets rug. As it gets thinner, each step thinner, each step becomes more noticeable. A 2025 randomized, placebo-controlled trial in 2025 randomized, placebo-controlled trial in adults with adults with mild to moderate mild to moderate knee osteoarthritis knee osteoarthritis found significant found significant improvements in improvements in improvements in pain scores with pain scores with collagen peptides collagen peptides compared to placebo compared to placebo over 6 months. A separate meta-analysis separate meta-analysis combining four combining four studies and over studies and over 500 patients also 500 patients also found significant found significant pain relief. But pain relief. But the same analysis the same analysis assessed all four assessed all four included studies included studies as having a as having a high risk of high risk of bias. So I bias. So I want you to want you to take this as take this as promising, but promising, but not definitive. It is not not definitive. It is not a replacement for prescribed a replacement for prescribed arthritis treatment or arthritis treatment or physical therapy.

physical therapy. Consider this as a Consider this as a possible additional possible additional level that is worth level that is worth discussing with your discussing with your medical team.

medical team. One of the core One of the core principles of principles of principles of naturopathic naturopathic naturopathic medicine is that medicine is that we we we use use use the least invasive and the least invasive and most effective most effective most effective intervention intervention intervention appropriate to the situation.

appropriate to the situation. For many women, this For many women, this means starting with means starting with movement, nutrition, and movement, nutrition, and basic support basic support before moving on before moving on to something more to something more aggressive.

aggressive. aggressive. Collagen may be Collagen may be part of this part of this foundation. So, foundation. So, what should you pay what should you pay attention to? Slightly less attention to? Slightly less morning stiffness in morning stiffness in the knees or hands the knees or hands after a few after a few months of regular months of regular use. This is not a complete use.

The Hormonal Connection Behind Both

This is not a complete disappearance of disappearance of joint discomfort. So, joint discomfort. So, collagen can be collagen can be beneficial for skin and beneficial for skin and joints. But here's something that joints. But here's something that almost no one almost no one connects, and it's connects, and it's actually the reason actually the reason for both cases. This is what for both cases. This is what I wanted you to I wanted you to definitely definitely definitely learn today.

If your skin If your skin changes and your joints changes and your joints become stiff become stiff around the same around the same time, it's time, it's not a coincidence. One hormone is responsible for both of these not a coincidence. One hormone is responsible for both of these processes processes processes. Estrogen. Estrogen directly directly directly stimulates fibroblasts stimulates fibroblasts to produce new to produce new collagen and helps collagen and helps inhibit inhibit inhibit MMP enzymes that MMP enzymes that break down collagen.

As estrogen levels naturally decline naturally decline during perimenopause, during perimenopause, collagen breakdown collagen breakdown may begin to may begin to outpace collagen outpace collagen production.

production. Research suggests that women can that women can lose a significant lose a significant amount of skin amount of skin collagen in the first collagen in the first few years after few years after menopause, after which menopause, after which the process the process the process slows down but slows down but continues. One review continues. One review found that found that estrogen deficiency after estrogen deficiency after menopause menopause menopause is associated with is associated with decreased decreased decreased collagen content in the skin; it is collagen content in the skin; it is estimated that losses estimated that losses are about 30% in the first 5 years after in the first 5 years after menopause. This is why menopause.

Why Skin and Joints Change at the Same Time

This is why joint stiffness and joint stiffness and skin changes so often skin changes so often appear at appear at appear at about the same about the same time in time in female patients. It is the same female patients. It is the same underlying hormonal underlying hormonal change that causes change that causes both phenomena. In both phenomena. In naturopathic naturopathic naturopathic medicine, there is a principle of " tolle causum"—treat tolle causum"—treat the cause. And the reason the cause. And the reason here is not an isolated here is not an isolated collagen deficiency. This is a collagen deficiency. This is a hormonal shift hormonal shift that results in that results in a decrease in a decrease in collagen production. When you collagen production. When you understand the cause, you understand the cause, you can work with can work with your body rather than your body rather than just fighting the just fighting the symptoms on the symptoms on the surface. Therefore, surface. Therefore, taking collagen does not taking collagen does not correct the decline in correct the decline in hormone levels. It is hormone levels. It is part of the bigger part of the bigger picture of picture of picture of hormonal hormonal hormonal health alongside health alongside other other other fundamental fundamental fundamental strategies we strategies we employ in the employ in the clinic: nutrition, clinic: nutrition, sleep, exercise, sleep, exercise, stress management, and overall stress management, and overall hormonal health. " Vis medicatrix naturae"—the healing Vis medicatrix naturae"—the healing power of nature. Your power of nature. Your body knows how to body knows how to heal itself, and my heal itself, and my job is to help job is to help remove the obstacles.

remove the obstacles. What to look What to look out for: Skin and out for: Skin and joint changes that joint changes that seem to occur seem to occur around the same around the same time in your life.

time in your life. This pattern in This pattern in itself is a itself is a clue clue clue worth paying attention to. worth paying attention to.

What to Watch For on Your Own Timeline

If you notice these If you notice these changes at the same time, it's changes at the same time, it's not a coincidence. This is what your hormones are saying.

your hormones are saying. Let me Let me summarize. summarize. summarize. So, the main idea: So, the main idea: collagen can collagen can help maintain help maintain the hydration and the hydration and elasticity of your elasticity of your skin. It can skin. It can help support the help support the comfort of your comfort of your joints, and joints, and the worsening of both the worsening of both conditions is deeply conditions is deeply linked to linked to hormonal hormonal hormonal changes during changes during perimenopause and perimenopause and menopause, not menopause, not simply aging.

This is something This is something most women most women never hear about, and it's never hear about, and it's exactly what I promised exactly what I promised you at the beginning of this you at the beginning of this video. This does not mean at all video. This does not mean at all that you are that you are powerless in powerless in the face of these changes. This the face of these changes. This means you means you finally know what's finally know what's really really really causing them. And causing them. And understanding the reason is always the first step towards changing something. If you changing something. If you want to delve deeper into want to delve deeper into this topic, I made a whole this topic, I made a whole video about what video about what happens to your happens to your hair and skin hair and skin during this transition, and during this transition, and how to support them from how to support them from the inside out. I'll leave the inside out. I'll leave the link right here.

the link right here. And if you take one thing from today, it's to one thing from today, it's to pay attention to the pay attention to the timeline. When timeline. When changes in your skin changes in your skin and joints and joints coincide with coincide with hormonal hormonal hormonal fluctuations, this fluctuations, this pattern tells you pattern tells you what to what to listen for. If you listen for. If you want want want honest, science- honest, science- based based based answers about what answers about what happens during happens during perimenopause, from perimenopause, from someone who treats it someone who treats it every day, subscribe.

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