

## LIVING

# Experts say popping collagen pills won't keep you young

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It's the controversial new face of skin care.

Collagen supplements are the new go-to ingredient for clear skin for wellness obsessives. The protein grows naturally in bones, skin, hair and nails, and depletes in the body over time. So people are turning to collagen supplements, made from animals and plants, to replenish their stores and fight signs of aging.

While these pills and powders are certainly popular — sales of collagen supplements reached \$98 million in 2017, per the Nutrition Business Journal — the science behind them is shaky.

“People are ingesting huge amounts of collagen thinking that if they overwhelm their body's system, that ... it's going to go to the skin,” Dr. Jessica Weiser, a dermatologist at New York Dermatology Group, tells The Post. While she says the supplements are generally safe in appropriate doses (consult a doctor or pharmacist), too much can spike your calcium levels, leading to kidney stones or even kidney failure.

Even if the supplements don't hurt you, there is “no way of proving ... that it's effective” in improving your skin, Weiser says. She explains that when you ingest collagen, your body circulates it to whatever area needs it the most — and the skin “is typically not a priority.” For example, small studies show that collagen supplements can help alleviate joint pain; it's possible your supplement will rush to those sites instead.

Still, fans of the protein swear by it. “Taking collagen has totally rejuvenated my skin and made me feel better all around,” writes Sally Kim, the founder of the ingestible skin-care line Crushed Tonic, in her new cookbook “[The Collagen Glow](#).” She claims to have seen an amazing about-face from her diet, which incorporates collagen supplements and collagen-rich foods, such as bone broth and anchovy stock.

Dr. Eudene Harry, an Orlando, Fla.-based physician and holistic health expert, thinks it's likelier that Kim's newfound glow is from her healthy diet overhaul, not collagen alone. But Harry says collagen can be part of a “comprehensive” skin-care meal plan, with antioxidant packed-fruits (think tomatoes, citrus and berries) and plenty of protein.

When choosing a supplement, Harry says to consult a doctor and pick carefully — especially because these collagen boosts aren't FDA regulated. She advises looking for a third-party tested supplement (it will say so on the box) stamped by a quality-control organization such as US Pharmacopeia or the National Science Foundation. “[I'm] wary of supplements that make fantastic claims — ‘cure this,’ ‘look 30 years younger,’” she says. “One thing cannot possibly do the job of everything.”