

COLLAGEN 101

A VERDURA METHOD RESOURCE GUIDE

Verdura Method:
Lifestyle Changes Before Medications
Science, Mindfulness, and Behavior Change
Working Together.



Verdura Method Resource Guides turn complex topics into plain language and gives you simple steps you can use today. Our aim is to equip you with the knowledge and tools to help you understand your body and make confident choices each day. It's time for you to take the lead in your own wellbeing.

QUESTIONS?

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WHAT IS COLLAGEN?

Your body makes its own collagen from the amino acids in the protein you eat, with vitamin C (and minerals like zinc/copper) as helpers.

You don't absorb whole collagen from food- your gut breaks it down into amino acids and small peptides, then your body rebuilds what it needs (explainer of that on next page).

Collagen production naturally slows with age, so eating enough protein and vitamin-C-rich foods supports it. Collagen supplements simply add extra building blocks and may help with aging skin or joint pain. They add to your own production, they don't replace it.

WHY DO PEOPLE TAKE IT?

Common goals include skin elasticity, fine lines and hydration, joint pain and better mobility, nail and hair strength, and a protein top-off if your diet is light on protein.

WHO BENEFITS MOST?

People focused on skin support, lots of repetitive impact on joints, low overall protein intake, or those in midlife and beyond when natural collagen production declines.

POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS

It's generally well-tolerated. Some claim mild stomach upset, fullness, or bad aftertaste. If you have allergies (e.g., fish for marine collagen), choose another source. If pregnant or breastfeeding check with your clinician.

ADDITIONAL FAQ'S

How long it takes to work?

- Skin: Modest improvements in hydration/elasticity with daily use in 8-12 weeks.
- Joints: Some people feel less everyday stiffness after 8-16 weeks of consistent use.
- Hair/Nails: Often stronger with less breakage after 8-12 weeks.

Can I cook with it?

Research claims peptides are heat-stable and can work in everyday cooking.

How much collagen should I take?

Most adults do well with 10-20 g of collagen peptides per day (1-2 scoops), taken daily. You can take it all at once or split into two servings. Timing isn't critical, mix into coffee, smoothies, yogurt, or water; If you're sensitive, start with 5-10 g/day and work up.

Can I drink it in coffee?

Yes, collagen peptides are heat-stable, so coffee, tea, oatmeal, or soup are all fine.

Are pills or powder better?

Pills and powder usually contain the same thing (hydrolyzed collagen peptides) so at the same daily dose, absorption and results are essentially the same.

Claims that powder "absorbs better" are mostly practical: powder dissolves right away and makes it easy to take a full 10-20g in 1-2 scoops, while capsules are small (0.5-1g each), may dissolve a bit slower, and many people underdose because taking 10-20 pills is unrealistic (and pricier).

What about liquid collagen?

Liquid collagen offers convenience and potentially faster absorption (though evidence is mixed), while collagen powder provides a higher concentration of collagen per serving, making it more cost-effective and versatile for mixing into drinks, though liquids often have more additives like sugar/flavors.

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WHERE COLLAGEN COMES FROM

What is Collagen made from?

Collagen is a type of protein- specifically the most abundant structural protein in your body (skin, joints, bones, tendons). When manufacturers break full collagen into smaller pieces for supplements, those pieces are called collagen peptides.

What is a Peptide?

Peptides are short chains of amino acids (amino acids = the tiny building blocks of protein). A protein is a long chain; a peptide is a short one. So: collagen = the full protein; collagen peptides = short fragments of that protein that dissolve and absorb more easily.

SUPPLEMENT SOURCES

Bovine (cow hide & bone):

The most common source. Usually provides types I & III—popular for skin, hair/nails, and general support. Neutral taste, widely available.

Marine (fish skin & scales):

Mostly type I. Fine texture, often mixes easily. Good option if you avoid beef.

Gelatin (cooked collagen):

Collagen that's been cooked so it gels when cooled (great for gummies/Jell-O). Typically from bovine or pig; marine gelatin also exists. Better for cooking than mixing into cold drinks.

Bone broth (food, not a standardized supplement):

Made by simmering bones (usually chicken or beef). Provides flavor, some protein/gelatin, and minerals, but collagen per cup varies a lot—so it's not a reliable way to hit a daily collagen target.

Vegan options:

There's no true plant collagen. "Vegan collagen" products are usually collagen builders (vitamin C, specific amino acids, minerals) that help your body make collagen.

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PILLS VS POWDERS VS LIQUID

Liquid collagen (ready-to-drink)

- Pros: No mixing; portable; easy for travel.
- Cons: Often lower collagen per serving (~4-10 g); usually more expensive per gram; may include sugars/flavors/fillers; “faster absorption” claims are unproven.

Collagen powder (most common)

- Pros: Higher dose per serving (often 10-20 g+); best value per gram; versatile (coffee, smoothies, yogurt); typically fewer additives.
- Cons: Needs mixing; some notice taste/texture; can clump if not stirred well (tip: add powder after liquid, or use a small whisk).

Capsules / pills

- Pros: No taste; ultra-convenient; good for flights/meetings.
- Cons: Tiny dose per capsule (usually 0.5-1 g), so hitting 10-20 g/day can mean 10-20 capsules; usually pricier per gram.

Which to choose?

- Convenience first: Liquid or capsules.
- Potency & value: Powder (easiest way to reach 10-20 g/day).
- Fewer additives: Often powder (plain, unflavored).

Bottom line: Both hydrolyzed forms (powder and liquid) are well-absorbed so the best choice depends on your budget, lifestyle, and preference for concentration versus convenience. While some brands or professionals may claim one is better than the other, there’s no hard research proving that. Good quality collagen that you enjoy, can afford and take consistently is the best option.

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THE 3 MAIN TYPES OF COLLAGEN

While there are many types of collagen, for this beginner resource guide, we will focus on the 3 main types you typically see.

What are the main types of collagen?

- Type I: Skin, hair, nails, tendons, and bone strength.
- Type II: Joints and cartilage (the “cushion” for movement).
- Type III: Works with Type I in skin, muscles, and blood vessels for elasticity and structure.

Quick mental model: Type I = structure, Type II = flexible joints, Type III = supple tissues.

Which sources give which types?

- Bovine (cow): Usually Types I & III → skin/hair/nails, general support.
- Marine (fish): Mostly Type I → skin/hair/nails.
- Chicken/eggshell: Often Type II → joints/cartilage.
- Gelatin: Cooked collagen (from bovine/pig; marine exists) that gels—same building blocks, used in cooking (gummies/soups).
- Bone broth (food): Simmered bones (chicken or beef); collagen varies by recipe, not a consistent “dose.”
- Vegan options: No true plant collagen. Look for collagen builders (vitamin C, specific amino acids, minerals) or rare fermentation-derived collagen.

Why some products mix types (“multi-collagen”)?

- Blends try to “cover everything” (I/II/III/V/X). That’s fine, but also means each type can be lower per serving. If you have a clear goal (skin or joints), choose a product that focuses on your target type (e.g., Type II for joints).

SOME ADDITIONAL UNDERSTANDING

Just like most things, you can go as deep as you’d like into the science of Collagen. For the sake of this as a beginner guide, we’re keeping it basic. You may run into somebody who shares additional info about *bioavailability*, or *types V and X* collagen. But as long as you have a basic understanding of the information in this guide, and have found a brand and product you enjoy, don’t worry if you don’t know the rest.

Scientists have identified up to 28 different types of collagen! There’s so much more to learn. But with the contents in this guide, you are more than equipped to feel confident with your choice.

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COLLAGEN & AGING

Over time, as our bodies age, collagen production decreases. One study found collagen levels peak between ages 25-34 years old.

After that period, collagen production begins to decline significantly – about 1.0-1.5 percent annually.

The collagen quality decreases as well. Besides general aging, menopause significantly reduces the production of collagen because of the decrease in bone mass and estrogen.

There are several visible signs that can indicate low collagen, such as:

- Wrinkles or sagging skin
- Skin that appears thin and hollow
- Weaker muscles and more body aches
- Less flexibility in ligaments and tendons
- More joint pain (osteoarthritis)
- Less joint mobility
- Gut health issues due to thinning tissue in the digestive system
- Restricted blood flow

What other factors damage collagen?

Although collagen levels naturally decline with age, there are a variety of other factors that can decrease collagen.

Lifestyle factors – such as obesity, smoking, sun exposure, overconsumption of alcohol, poor air quality, a diet with lots of processed foods high in sugar and processed carbs, and other causes of oxidative stress – can accelerate the aging process.

Genetics can play a role as well. Autoimmune diseases – when the body attacks its own tissues – and genetic conditions, such as the bone disease osteogenesis imperfecta (an inherited disease that causes weak bones), also can damage collagen.

READY FOR MORE?

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THE ROLE OF VITAMINS & MINERALS

Why Vitamin C (and Key Nutrients) Matter

Vitamin C: Vitamin C is absolutely essential for building strong collagen; Vitamin C powers the enzymes that “lock” collagen fibers in place. Best sources: fruits and vegetables (citrus, berries, kiwi, bell peppers, broccoli, broccolini, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale, collards, bok choy, napa cabbage, red/green cabbage, spinach, arugula, mustard greens, swiss chard, tomatoes, tomatillos, snow peas, green peas, asparagus, zucchini, summer squash, sweet potatoes). Aim to eat 3-5 daily rather than relying on Vitamin C pills.

Protein (amino acids): You need enough overall protein- especially glycine and proline- from foods like tofu, beans, eggs and fish. Supplements can help, but food is the foundation. Aim to eat 1-2 variations a day.

Iron: Iron works with vitamin C to activate collagen-forming enzymes. Get it from beans, and lentils, spinach, swiss chard, beet greens, kale, mustard greens, broccoli, brussels sprouts, peas, artichokes. (Boost absorption by adding Vitamin C from lemon, bell pepper, tomatoes.)

Copper: Needed for an enzyme (lysyl oxidase) that strengthens collagen cross-links. Find it in nuts, seeds, beans, and cocoa, shiitake mushrooms, potatoes (with skin), asparagus, leafy greens (kale, spinach), artichokes.

Zinc: Supports collagen production and wound healing. Sources include seafood, beans, and pumpkin seeds, green peas, mushrooms.

Manganese (nice to have): Supports connective-tissue enzymes; whole grains and nuts provide it.

Bottom line: Prioritize **whole foods- especially fruits and vegetables-** to supply these nutrients. Try not to use supplements as the main strategy.

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EXPLAINER ON BONE BROTH

Bone broth is thought to be the ancestral way humans consumed collagen. Today, by simmering animal bones in water with apple cider vinegar for 18+ hours, the ACV acts like a magnet, pulling the amino acids, protein, collagen and minerals from the bones into the water creating a nutrient-rich broth

Collagen's main amino acids are glycine, proline, hydroxyproline and glutamine. *Glutamine* is key for intestinal cells and can support the gut barrier under stress or illness (major injury, intensive care, certain treatment-related gut issues), but for everyday "gut healing" or common digestive complaints, the evidence is mixed.

Bone broth contains varying amounts of these amino acids- including little-to-moderate glutamine depending on the recipe or brand- so while it's comforting and hydrating, it is not a proven medical treatment for specific gut diseases.

If you are struggling with gut issues, bone broth alone will not be a magic pill. It's imperative to change your lifestyle and get to the root cause of your gut issues. Removing inflammatory foods, reducing stress, getting quality sleep, and staying hydrated, are all part of healing the gut.

Trusted Brands:

Bonafide Provisions: [Beef Bone Broth](#)

Bonafide Provisions: [Chicken Bone Broth](#)

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RECOMMENDED BRANDS BASED ON NEEDS

For Omnivores:

Bovine (skin/general):

Momentus Collagen Peptides
Great Lakes

Bovine (joint-leaning)

Klean Athlete Collagen + C

For Pescatarians:

Marine (skin / general)

Sports Research Marine Collagen

Marine (joints)

Nature's Life Marine Collagen (capsules, can be paired with the skin Type I above)

For Vegans (collagen builders)

Sunwarrior Collagen Building Protein Peptides

This guide is for education only and isn't medical advice. Always talk with your healthcare provider before starting any supplement or making changes to your routine. Use products at your own discretion and do your own research. Some links may be affiliate links, which means I may earn a small commission at no extra cost to you. I'm not responsible for individual purchases, reactions, or results.

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UNDERSTANDING 3RD PARTY SEALS & TESTING

Supplements aren't pre-approved by the FDA before they hit shelves, so quality can vary a lot. A trusted third-party seal tells you that an independent lab checked what's in the tub and what's not.

What Third-Party Testing Screens For (and why it matters):

- Identity & dose: Confirms it's really hydrolyzed collagen peptides and that a "10 g" scoop is actually ~10 g.
- Contaminants: Checks for heavy metals (e.g., lead, arsenic, mercury, cadmium), microbes (mold/bacteria), and sometimes pesticides/solvents—important for animal-derived and marine products.
- Purity/adulterants: Verifies no undeclared proteins, fillers, or drugs; for athletes it screens for banned substances.
- Label accuracy & allergens: Ensures claims match the contents (e.g., marine = fish; no hidden soy/gluten).

Third-Party Testing Organizations & Seals:

- U.S. Pharmacopeia (USP): The USP Verified Mark confirms that a product contains the listed ingredients in the specified amounts and is free from harmful levels of contaminants. It also indicates adherence to FDA Good Manufacturing Practices.
- NSF International (NSF): Basic NSF certification verifies ingredient safety and label accuracy. The NSF Certified for Sport® seal is trusted by athletes as it ensures products are free from over 270 substances banned by major sports organizations.
- Informed Sport / Informed Choice: These certifications are for sports nutrition products, ensuring they are tested for banned substances. Informed Sport certifies every batch of a product through testing.
- Banned Substances Control Group (BSCG): BSCG certification confirms a supplement is free from banned substances, harmful contaminants, and unsafe levels of heavy metals.
- ConsumerLab.com: This organization independently purchases and tests products for label accuracy and contaminants, publishing reports for consumers.

Bottom line: A seal doesn't make it "magic," but it reduces risk and increases trust that you're getting clean, accurately dosed collagen.