

## We hear so much about COLLAGEN - BUT WHAT IS IT, EXACTLY?

Collagen is a strong, flexible fibrous type of protein that is found throughout our bodies, including our bones, muscles, tendons and in the middle or dermis layer of the skin. Under a microscope, collagen looks like bands of rope bound together or stacked logs. It acts as skin's support structure or scaffolding that helps maintain skin's shape. In fact, 70% of our skin is composed of collagen.

## The Effects of Aging on Collagen Production

As we age, our body's ability to produce collagen decreases over time. The cells responsible for creating collagen, fibroblasts, are no longer able to produce it as effectively as they once could. Additionally, existing collagen fibers become fragmented, bent and frayed.

## Understanding Collagen Loss and Aging

Collagen loss is a natural part of the aging process and affects everyone. As early as 18 years old, we lose about one percent of collagen each year. By age 50, we can lose up to 30 percent of our collagen. The amount of collagen loss and when it occurs varies from person to person. Surprisingly, facial aging can begin as early as our 20s, when skin firmness begins to decrease due to a combination of internal factors such as genetics and natural aging, as well as external/lifestyle factors such as sun exposure.

## GOOD NEWS: IT'S POSSIBLE TO HELP BOOST THE SKIN'S OWN NATURAL COLLAGEN PRODUCTION

Sculptra Aesthetic uses Poly-L-lactic acid to gradually correct facial wrinkles and folds by stimulating the skin's natural collagen production over time. Results appear gradually over a few months and last for more than two years, in contrast to traditional hyaluronic acid fillers which last only 6 to 12 months. Poly-L-lactic acid is a safe and biodegradable substance that has been used in medical products for over 30 years. The treatment consists of three injections over three to four months.



