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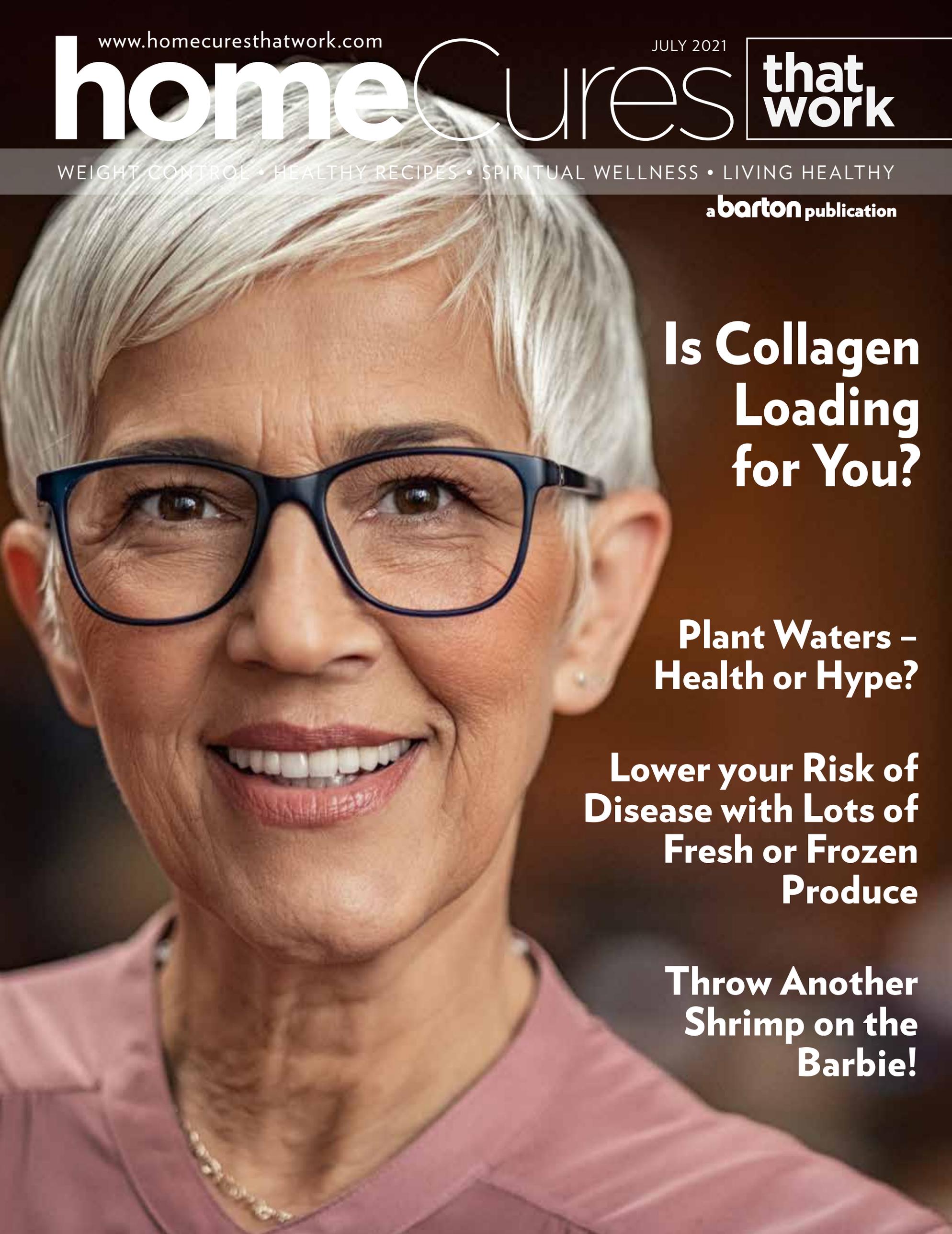
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# homeCures

**that  
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WEIGHT CONTROL • HEALTHY RECIPES • SPIRITUAL WELLNESS • LIVING HEALTHY

a **barton** publication



## **Is Collagen Loading for You?**

**Plant Waters –  
Health or Hype?**

**Lower your Risk of  
Disease with Lots of  
Fresh or Frozen  
Produce**

**Throw Another  
Shrimp on the  
Barbie!**

# Home Cures That Work

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## AUTHORS



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Vegetables provide a multitude of cancer fighting nutrients and compounds. Whether you choose fresh or frozen veggies, include a variety of vegetables in your meals. There is no other way to keep yourself from an unhealthy lifestyle that eventually includes you in the list of people with obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and others, except by consuming more fruits and vegetables. This issue contains some heart-felt reasons why you should eat lots of vegetables and fruits.

These Grilled Shrimp Skewers are the bomb! The spicy and salty combination is what makes them so good. I've had it on my mind to create an easy summer dish: skewers grilled to perfection. Now that the weather is warmer, we've been grilling almost every night. The excitement of being able to grill again and not dirty my kitchen is always great!

You might have heard it said that electrolyte balance is crucial for our health, wellbeing, and performance. That's absolutely true. Electrolytes produce a slight electrical charge that powers our cells and enables a flow of electrical signals throughout our bodies, helping to maintain fluid balance and hydration, healthy pH levels, nerve and muscle function, and a strong gut. In this article, we're taking a closer look at the best plant sources of electrolytes.

One last thing...Collagen has become a hot-ticket wellness item. Everyone—including me—has started hoarding it in either liquid, supplement, or gummy form. The reason why it's blown up as a sort of diet or vitamin staple is because that collagen vault you have within you is constantly being subtracted from your system (sorry). As we age—along with plenty of other markers—collagen is broken down and the production of new protein slows. So yes, we're always making more of the stuff, but at the same time, we're constantly depleting it as well. So just how much collagen do you need to replenish over time? Keep reading to find out.

If you care at all about how well you're doing in the longevity game, it's worth paying attention to your veggies, grilling, plant water and collagen!

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For your health,

Cheryl Ravey, Editor  
Home Cures That Work



## IS COLLAGEN LOADING FOR YOU?

Collagen loading is essentially consuming a large dose of collagen. During this time, your body receives all of the amino acids it requires to target any issues you may be having with your skin, joints, muscles or bones. But, is it safe to take high doses of collagen over a short period?



## PLANT WATERS — HEALTH OR HYPE?

Fruits and vegetables are excellent sources of electrolytes. Here are four of the best plant based waters – great all-rounders containing electrolyte minerals.

## THROW ANOTHER SHRIMP ON THE BARBIE!

These shrimp skewers are very simple to make and so delicious. They take no time at all to prepare, so they're great for a weekday meal yet they're fancy enough for parties, special occasions, and holidays.



## LOWER YOUR RISK OF DISEASE WITH LOTS OF FRESH OR FROZEN PRODUCE

In other words, eating lots of fruits and veggies is correlated with a substantial gain in mental wellbeing, happiness, and overall life satisfaction.



by Dr. Scott Saunders, M.D.

# Is Collagen Loading for You?

**K**NOW “COLLAGEN LOADING” sounds like a reference to illicit drug use, but it’s actually a healthy thing. Many are advocating high doses of collagen to add youth to skin, muscles, and joints. In this article I will tell you what collagen is, and then talk about the ways collagen is used. Finally, I will provide some guidance on what to do to make sure your own collagen is plentiful, young, and healthy.

## What is Collagen?

The most abundant protein in the animal kingdom is a strong fiber that holds everything together. It’s like The Force, it has a light side, a dark side, and it holds the Universe together. Our bones are made of collagen, with calcium deposited around

it to make it stiff. Muscles, tendons, ligaments, and the underlying layer of skin are primarily collagen.

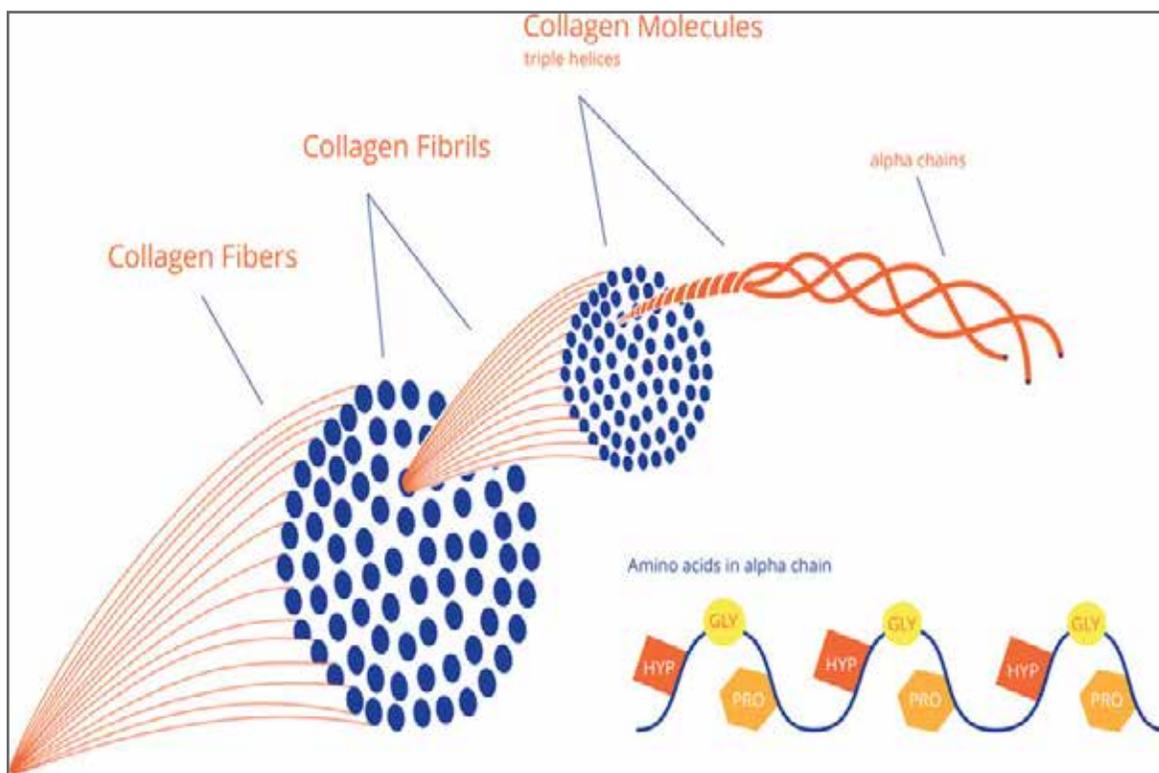
Collagen is a very strong fiber, like a rope. When I was in Boy Scouts, we made rope out of hemp (yes, marijuana, but this was THC-free). The individual fibers of hemp were wound together. Each fiber was not very long – only a few inches. But winding them together could produce a very long string because they pull together tighter. The then string gets stronger, as there is more tension on the string. This is repeated as three strings are wound into a small rope, and three small ropes are wound into a big fat rope. Because of the winding, the rope gets stronger as there is more tension because all the strands are pulled tighter together. A rope works by friction.

Collagen is similar. A triple-helix, three

strands, are bound together in the basic structure. These are then wound into fibrils, which come together to form the collagen fibers. Collagen fibers are the basic structure of bones, joints, tendons, and ligaments – the ropes that hold our bodies together. [1]

These fibers can withstand tremendous pressure, and can stretch without breaking. If compared by weight, they are stronger than steel.[2] So, ounce-for-ounce, you’re stronger than SUPERMAN![3]

But, over time, that strength of youth seems to get lost. The collagen fibers thin out. Our bodies become soft. We no longer have the same strength, or stamina. Our skin gets thinner, with less collagen to hold it together, it cuts, tears, and scrapes easier. It no longer stretches tightly, and begins to sag and wrinkle. Our muscles can tear and get sore. We get tendon and



ligament injuries more easily. People get knee injuries, or rotator cuff tears of the shoulder without any major trauma – it just weakens and breaks! A normal rotator cuff tendon that should easily handle a ton, tears with hardly any weight! Also, the joints wear out and no longer have elasticity. This all happens because we are losing COLLAGEN fibers!

To counter this loss, people have tried all sorts of tricks. You know someone is going to take advantage of every opportunity to sell something people think they need. There are multiple marketing methods to replenish collagen, and people are spending thousands, and now in the United States, hundreds of millions of dollars every year with collagen creams, lotions, potions, injections, and supplements. But, do they work? Do they really help the skin re-gain a youthful level of collagen fibers? Do the joints really get stronger? Can we bring our tendons, muscles, and ligaments back to being stronger than the MAN OF STEEL???? Let's look.

While injections of collagen under the skin will puff-out wrinkles, and will stay there for a little while, over time it will diminish, and move around. The injected collagen

does not become part of the structure, so it doesn't make the skin stronger.

On the other hand, eating collagen might provide some benefit. There is some evidence that taking partially-digested collagen might increase collagen in the skin. [4] Also, there are many studies to show that taking collagen can increase connective tissue. Supplementation with partially-digested collagen protein improved the strength of the Achilles tendon in one study.[5]

The problem with these studies is that they are mostly done in small groups, and they are done by the manufacturers of "collagen peptides." In spite of this, my patients have told me that they have found great benefits to taking collagen peptides, such as stronger hair and nails, as well as less pain in the joints. However, there are many ways to get this protein. It isn't necessary to buy powders, pills, or supplements to get more collagen.

## Digestion of Collagen

The stomach does not digest collagen

easily. Collagen is not water-soluble, and therefore requires a high acid content to "denature" or open-up so it can be digested.[6] Thus, as we age, we tend to make less acid, and therefore don't digest the collagen fibers easily. Collagen then becomes a fiber source instead of a protein source. A whole protein cannot be used in our bodies. We must break it down to individual amino acids, absorb them, and then use them build up our own collagen. That's why the stomach acid is so important.

One answer to this is to buy the partially-digested collagen made from fish scales, animal skins, bones, and other animal connective tissue, called "collagen peptides." This is not whole collagen, but rather "peptides" which are short pieces of the collagen protein. These peptides still must be broken down to be used, but since they are not "wound-up" and don't need acid to denature them, they are already prepared for the small intestine enzymes to break them down into amino acids.

Another way to make sure you have enough building blocks of collagen is to make enough acid in your stomach. This is best achieved by having an empty stomach between meals. This gives time for the stomach to "reset" and make more acid, as well as the enzymes that work in an acid environment to make collagen into "peptides" that can then go into the small intestine and become the amino acids you need to make collagen.

You can also deal with the digestion issue by making your own "denatured" or partially-digested collagen. This has been done for thousands of years by all people in the world in boiling bones, making soup, and all sorts of broth. As collagen is boiled it denatures and breaks down to peptides. Gelatin is a product of collagen. These forms of collagen don't require as much digestion so they can

increase the amino acids for us to build our own collagen.

The last issue with digestion is the combinations of food we eat. Protein requires a lot of acid to denature and get digested well, but carbohydrates don't. When we have glucose (sugar) in the stomach, we make a hormone (GIP, or gastric inhibitory peptide) that suppresses acid production. Thus, if you have sugar with protein, it may suppress your acid production and limit your ability to digest especially collagen proteins.

## Supplements to Build Collagen

Dr. Linus Pauling, after much research, was of the opinion that scurvy, a deficiency of vitamin C, was a common illness in the United States. One of the primary problems in scurvy is a deficiency of hydroxyproline for collagen production. Thus, those with scurvy break down every part of their bodies. They get joints worn to the bone, stress-fractures in their bones, and tears of their skin with internal and external bleeding. The ligaments that hold their teeth wear out and cause the teeth to fall out. Dr. Pauling recommended high doses of vitamin C to overcome this deficiency – over 10,000mg per day. You may know people who have had joint replacements for worn-out joints, rotator-cuff tears, teeth falling out, and bleeding problems. These may be due to a lack of collagen that could be due to a mild form of scurvy.[7] Besides vitamin C, zinc and copper are also necessary to produce collagen.[8]

## Exercise to Build Collagen

Health

### THE BEST HIIT WORKOUT



**WARM UP**  
Walk for 10 minutes (effort level 5 on a scale of 1 to 10).

**INTERVAL 1**  
Run for 4 minutes fast (effort level 8 or 9), then walk for 3 minutes (effort level 5).

**INTERVAL 2**  
Run for 4 minutes fast, then walk for 3 minutes.

**INTERVAL 3**  
Run for 4 minutes fast, then walk for 3 minutes.

**INTERVAL 4**  
Run for 4 minutes fast, then walk for 3 minutes (the walk is your cooldown).

The single best thing to do to help your body make collagen is to exercise. "Exercise is what helps deliver the amino acids into the ligaments," says Baar at UC Davis.[9] Exercise stimulates the production of collagen by all fibroblasts, not just those in the joints and muscles, but even the skin will improve with exercise. Those same studies quoted above that show increases in the thickness of skin or the strength of tendons, used exercise along with the supplements to increase collagen production. Remember, the supplements by themselves will not help, it requires exercise to increase production. We must build each fiber of collagen individually. Eating more only increases amino acids, the actual building requires the fibroblasts to get to work and start making them into collagen. [10]

## Sleep to Build Collagen

What does sleep have to do with building collagen? Glad you asked! When we sleep early in the evening, we release a large amount of HGH (growth hormone) that initiates the repair of all parts of our bodies. Everything gets fixed at night: brain, blood vessels, intestines, bones, muscles, tendons, and ligaments. HGH stimulates fibroblast cells to make collagen. This is essential for keeping your body young and having all the collagen you need. The most important way to get HGH is to go to bed by 10 PM with an empty stomach. The empty stomach produces a hormone called Ghrelin (growth hormone releasing hormone). Even if you go to bed early, but eat at night, you'll miss the optimum time to get that HGH.

## Stress and Collagen Destruction

If I were to put all the "anti-aging" supplements, pills, potions, drugs, surgeries, and so forth on a scale from one to a hundred on how much they affected life-span and aging, they would altogether add up to maybe 10. Stress is 90. I cannot over-emphasize how stress negatively impacts collagen production. The stress hormones are catabolic,[11] which means they break-down the body, especially collagen. When "cortisone" (the major stress hormone) or any of its derivatives is injected into a joint, the collagen is dissolved, and the fibroblasts that are needed to make more are killed. If you have ever seen a person with thin skin that tears easily it is due to excessive cortisol over a long period of time. You can easily destroy the "perfect"

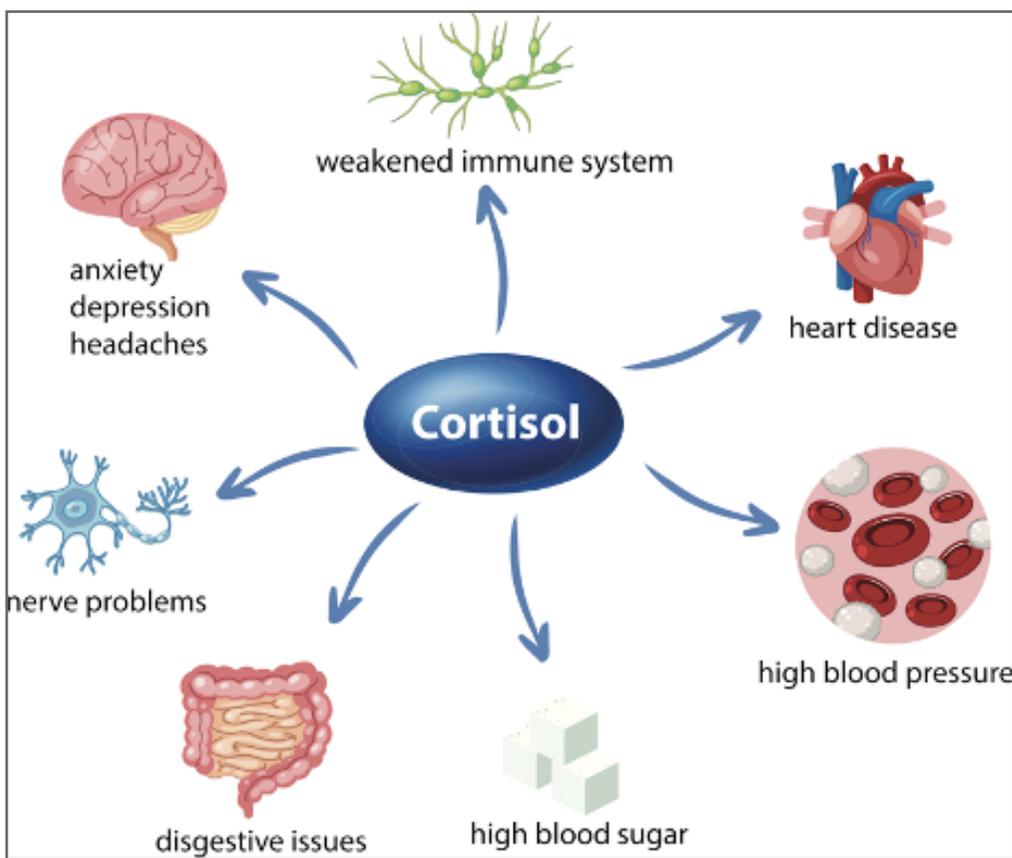
Anti-Aging diet, supplement, and exercise program with stress. There is no comparison. Thus, the single most important part of your collagen loading anti-aging program is stress reduction.

## Recommendations for Collagen Production

Collagen loading is a great idea, and you can buy all kinds of powders and pills, but remember that just providing the amino acids doesn't mean you will make more collagen. The following recommendations will help you keep a youthful body, prevent wearing out of your joints, and the thinning of your skin. You don't have to do all of them every day, but the more you do them, the better your connective tissue will be. These are the rules for staying young and preventing the breakdown of your body.

- Exercise – almost daily weight-bearing exercise. HIIT (High-intensity interval training) is excellent.

- Bone broth – drink about 16 oz per day, make a soup, or have Gelatin.
- Don't eat sugar, starch, or sweet things with protein. (low-starch vegetables are fine)
- Vitamin C – take about 1,000 mg per day (if you have scurvy, take 5,000 to 10,000 mg)
- Wait 5 hours between meals and have no food after 6pm.
- Sleep by 10 PM.
- Avoid stress and worry. (MOST IMPORTANT!!!)



Sources: [1] [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Multiple-collagen-fibrils-form-into-collagen-fibres-Amino-acids-on-the-alpha-chain\\_fig1\\_330146748](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Multiple-collagen-fibrils-form-into-collagen-fibres-Amino-acids-on-the-alpha-chain_fig1_330146748) [2] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK21582/> [3] <https://fanart.tv/fanart/movies/49521/movieposter/man-of-steel-5aa872a43b71c.jpg> [4] <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/24401291/> [5] Randomized Controlled Trial Nutrients; . 2019 Jan 2;11(1):76. doi: 10.3390/nu11010076. Oral Supplementation of Specific Collagen Peptides Combined with Calf-Strengthening Exercises Enhances Function and Reduces Pain in Achilles Tendinopathy Patients. Stephan F E Praet 1 2, Craig R Purdam 3, Marijke Welvaert 4 5, Nicole Vlahovich 6, Gregg Lovell 7, Louise M Burke 8, Jamie E Gaida 9 10, Silvia Manzanero 11, David Hughes 12, Gordon Waddington 13 14; PMID: 30609761 PMCID: PMC6356409 DOI: 10.3390/nu11010076 [6] <https://www.msn.com/en-us/health/nutrition/5-things-you-need-to-know-before-taking-a-collagen-supplement/ar-BB18tKKx#:~:text=%22The%20collagen%20is%20going%20to%20be%20digested%20by,which%20is%20the%20type%20found%20in%20most%20powders.> [7] <https://paulingblog.wordpress.com/2021/05/12/why-vitamin-c-the-scurvy-connection/> [8] <https://www.consumerreports.org/supplements/the-real-deal-on-collagen/#:~:text=All%20protein%20you%20consume%2C%20collagen%20included%2C%20is%20processed,amino%20acids%20in%20the%20digestive%20system%2C%E2%80%9D%20Perez%20says.> [9] Randomized Controlled Trial Nutrients; . 2019 Jan 2;11(1):76. doi: 10.3390/nu11010076. Oral Supplementation of Specific Collagen Peptides Combined with Calf-Strengthening Exercises Enhances Function and Reduces Pain in Achilles Tendinopathy Patients. Stephan F E Praet 1 2, Craig R Purdam 3, Marijke Welvaert 4 5, Nicole Vlahovich 6, Gregg Lovell 7, Louise M Burke 8, Jamie E Gaida 9 10, Silvia Manzanero 11, David Hughes 12, Gordon Waddington 13 14; PMID: 30609761 PMCID: PMC6356409 DOI: 10.3390/nu11010076 [10] [https://cdn-img.health.com/sites/default/files/wp\\_migrated\\_images/best-hiit-workout.jpg](https://cdn-img.health.com/sites/default/files/wp_migrated_images/best-hiit-workout.jpg) [11] <https://www.granitenutrition.com/nutritional-research/2017/5/16/summary-of-anabolic-catabolic-hormones>



by Rob Fischer

# Plant Waters — Health or Hype?

**P**ERHAPS YOU'VE NEVER thought about it before, but it's true. God cares about you. He cares if you are sick and He wants us to take care of our bodies. Yet what you eat is your choice. You have free will over what you put in your mouth. God cares what you eat, but He is not going to dictate your every bite.

For the past few years, alternate, natural sports drinks have gained in popularity as people have realized that many of the conventional sports drinks contain sugar, food dyes, and artificial flavoring.

Coconut water was one of the first and most successful of these new, natural sports drinks.

In fact, in 2013, coconut waters collectively topped \$400 million in sales.[1] So it's no wonder that beverage companies are introducing additional plant waters to quench this market's thirst. And as consumers, we seem to be craving anything that touts health, especially if it's natural. And apparently we're willing to pay for it, because these don't come cheaply—often costing several dollars per serving.

We seem to be craving anything that touts

health, especially if it's natural. We're willing to pay several dollars per serving.

Following coconut water, some of the newbies to arrive on the shelves include:

- Aloe water
- Almond water
- Artichoke water
- Birch water
- Cactus water

- Maple water
- Olive water
- Watermelon water
- Waters containing combinations of the above.[2]

Each of these plant waters makes special health claims about the ability of their water to do this or that. “Some of the health claims appear to be exaggerated,” explains dietitian Lauren Graf.[3]

Whether you choose to drink them or not really comes down to the benefit you hope to obtain. If you’re simply looking for enjoyment of a natural beverage with health benefits, you may want to try each one until you find one you like. But sports dietitian, Nancy Clark, RD, challenges us to be aware that we can obtain the same benefits or more by eating whole foods. [4]

Another reason many are reaching for the new plant waters has to do with electrolytes and workout recovery. Electrolytes are minerals that are essential to normal and proper function of the body. In short, we would die without them! During workouts and sports competitions, electrolytes can become depleted as they leave the body through sweat.

Depletion of electrolytes can cause cramping, low energy, headaches, irregular heart rhythm, and even more serious symptoms.[5] Some of the more important mineral electrolytes include: sodium, magnesium, potassium, and calcium.[6] We lose more sodium when we sweat than any other mineral.[7]

Replenishing electrolytes is especially important for extreme athletes and those exercising for longer periods of time in the heat. Some of the symptoms of low electrolytes mimic those of dehydration. The problem is that if you try to remedy

a low electrolyte issue by drinking normal water, the water may continue to dilute the amount of minerals in the body and worsen the deficiencies.[8]

## How Healthy are Plant Waters?

Apparently, many people think that because something is natural it’s therefore good for us and cannot hurt us, but this is very naïve. Many natural supplements are very powerful and can have dangerous side effects just like the droning lists in the prime-time drug commercials.

Take aloe vera juice for instance. Following are some of the warnings about drinking this “health” beverage. Aloe vera juice: [9]

- Is a laxative that can cause diarrhea and inhibit drug absorption if a person is on medication.
- Can also lower potassium levels in the body, which can play havoc with our electrolytes and promote dehydration.
- Can cause uterine contractions in pregnant women resulting in miscarriage or birth defects.
- Contains latex, which prompts numerous health risks and allergic reactions.
- Is even linked with cancer when consumed over a prolonged period.

While many of the other plant water beverages don’t carry the above dangerous side effects, they may not provide the best solution for which they are promoted. If you’re looking for a way to replace electrolytes following a workout, beware of the following:

- Watermelon water is high in potassium, but low in sodium and magnesium.[10] It also has a very high glycemic index value—not good for those with high blood sugar.

- Prickly pear cactus juice is not particularly high in any of the important minerals for electrolyte replacement. It also contains “natural flavors” a euphemism for very unnatural[11]

- Artichoke water does not contain very high levels of sodium or potassium—two primary electrolytes athletes are looking for in a rehydration beverage. [12]

- Maple water emphasizes that it’s rich in manganese, a mineral that very few people are low in and that we want to avoid getting too much of.[13]

In addition to the above, factor in these issues:

- Plant waters contain natural sugars that add to our already sugar-overloaded diets.
- Plant waters offer a poor replacement for their solid food counterparts.
- Plant waters typically cost \$3 per 8 oz. – a high price for not much value.

Eating nutritious whole foods before and after a workout can achieve the same healthy levels of electrolytes. A banana for instance, offers 450 to 600 mg of potassium.[14] [15]

And peanut butter offers high levels of magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and sodium.

Other less expensive and less trendy natural drinks can also help replenish electrolytes. V8 juice provides a good source of vitamins, potassium and sodium.[16] Whole milk offers respectable

levels of calcium, phosphorus, and potassium.[17] Natural, unflavored mineral waters can contain good levels of magnesium, calcium, sodium and other trace minerals.[18]

## To Drink or Not To Drink

It seems in the end, that your motivations will be the major driver in whether or not you join the plant water trend.

- If you simply enjoy the adventure of trying new, exotic flavors then go for it. Test them all and see which ones you like, but recognize that none of them offer the silver bullet for great health.
- If you work out heavily and want to replenish electrolytes, then “Pick up a spoon and fork,” advises sports dietitian Nancy Clark, RD. Nutrient- and mineral-rich whole foods offer the best solution.[19]
- If you exercise moderately, you’re probably getting all the minerals your body needs by eating a healthy diet of organic whole foods.[20]



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# Throw Another Shrimp on the Barbie!

**S**HRIMP MAY BE small in size but make no mistake; they are big in nutrient density! An extremely versatile food, shrimp is widely available year round, fresh or frozen, which makes it a cook book favorite and arguably the most popular seafood in the United States. It is also one form of fighting Alzheimer's disease with omega-3s.

If you're looking for a low-fat, low-calorie, high-protein food, look no further. According to Nutritiondata.com, a 3oz serving of shrimp supplies 18g of protein and only 85 calories, which makes it an excellent food for people trying to manage their weight. Shrimp is also a great source of vitamin D, vitamin B12 and selenium, a nutrient that plays an important part of antioxidant enzymes that protect cells against the effects of free radicals.

We've all heard that we need to increase the amount of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids in our diet, and shrimp and seafood are a great source. The body cannot produce omega-3 by itself and so it's vital that we get enough from our diet. Omega-3 helps keep the brain healthy and may prevent coronary heart disease by helping to keep the cardiovascular system healthy. In fact, the Harvard School of Public Health recommends eating fish once or twice a week to reduce the risk of stroke, depression, Alzheimer's disease, and other chronic conditions.

Despite these amazing health benefits, shrimp has a reputation for being a high cholesterol food. But a 1996 study done at Rockefeller University Hospital put concerns to rest showing that the cholesterol content of shrimp was no longer a worry. A shrimp diet actually raises levels of HDL, or "good" cholesterol, and decreases levels of LDL, or "bad" cholesterol.

Similarly, if you are worried about mercury levels, don't be. The FDA describes shrimp as being characteristically low in mercury, making it a far healthier choice to species such as



shark, swordfish, king mackerel, or tilefish that are notoriously higher in mercury, so eat up!

## Fire Grilled Shrimp Skewers

- 1/4 cup of extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp of paprika
- 2 garlic cloves crushed
- 1-2 tsp of Tabasco
- 1 tbsp of lime juice
- Sea Salt and Black Pepper to taste
- 2 lbs of large raw shrimp peeled

Combine oil, garlic, spices, tabasco, and lime juice in a bowl. Coat shrimp in mixture and allow to marinate for 2-3 hours before grilling. Thread shrimp on to skewers and grill 2 minutes each side or until pink.



# Lower your Risk of Disease with Lots of Fresh or Frozen Produce



## How to Add a Variety of Fruits and Vegetables to Your Diet to Protect Your Health

**T**HE QUARTER OF the population eating the fewest fruits and vegetables has over three times as much heart disease as the quarter of the population that eats the most. Eat a minimum of six servings of fresh vegetables per day. This isn't as much as it seems. One serving equals only one-half cup or one cup if they are leafy vegetables. A good rule of thumb is to stay with brightly colored veggies. And eat a wide variety—mostly raw and organic, if possible.

Also add one to three servings of fresh fruit per day. Again have a wide variety—and again, raw and organic if possible. Buying local produce may be more important than buying organic, since freshness is so important. You're better off buying fresh, vibrant, conventionally grown produce than wilted organic.

Stay away from white potatoes, too. Your body reacts to them like it reacts to white bread. Increasing vegetables and fruits from two servings to only five servings a day can cut the incidence of

many cancers in half. That's only two and one-half cups. Consider getting a Vita Mix. It's like a kitchen in one appliance and is the best juicer on the market.

Make sure you get your money's worth from your juicer. Drink five glasses of fresh juiced fruits and veggies every week. I combine them in my drinks, changing the mix each time. As an alternative, you might get a high quality "green drink" in powder form. Mix with water and drink every day. There are lots of good ones on the market. I use

Barlean's Greens and Life Extension's Vital Greens Mix.

The human body evolved with a diet that was high in fruits and vegetables. If you fight nature with your diet, your health and energy level will tank. People are shocked at how much better they feel after substituting high-fiber foods for fast foods and processed foods. You need fiber to regulate your bowels, for good colon health and for weight loss if you are overweight. Eating fruits and vegetables increases your fiber intake. Juicing makes it easy.

How you combine your foods is also important. The best combinations are proteins or fats with vegetables, vegetables with simple carbohydrates or vegetables with fat. Combining your fruit with protein and healthy fats slows sugar/carbohydrate absorption. In fact, make protein the first bite of each meal to slow absorption even more. That means less fat storage, longer lasting energy levels and fewer food cravings shortly after you eat. And you will easily accomplish that by eating less. In fact, even if you eat unhealthy food from time to time, eating less of it at each meal can be almost as important as eating the right food.

Remember to lower your carbohydrate intake by replacing high-calorie, low-nutrient carbohydrates (white bread, pasta, rice, table sugar, soda, candy) with low-calorie, high-nutrient carbohydrates (brightly colored fruits and vegetables and sweet potatoes).

If you add sweeteners to anything, the healthiest sugar substitute we know of is stevia. Stevia is a delicious natural herb sweetener with added health benefits. You can find it your local health food store. Avoid artificial sweeteners. Most are toxic and can undermine your health.

For example, high doses of aspartame

may lead to neurodegeneration. Aside from the damage it can do to your brain, aspartame can cause cancer. One well-controlled, peer-reviewed, seven-year study even found that as little as 20 mg per day can cause cancer in humans. One 12-ounce diet soda contains about 180 mg of aspartame, so you do the math for that risk!

It can also lead to multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, memory and hearing loss and hormonal problems.

How about Splenda? That's harmless, right? Well, look at what a recent study, published in the Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health found. Splenda reduces the amount of good bacteria in your intestines by 50 percent, contributes to weight gain, increases the pH level in your intestines (bad for your digestion) and affects a glycoprotein in your body that can have crucial health effects, particularly if you're on certain medications.

"Diet soda anyone?"

In addition to changing what you eat, consider changing when you eat. The fluctuations in your insulin levels, which are so damaging to your system, can be controlled by eating smaller, more frequent meals. This will also boost your metabolism, causing calories to be burned faster, and will raise your energy level.

Research indicates that eating certain foods can help lower your risk of several diseases.

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#### EAT AT LEAST FOUR SERVINGS OF VEGETABLES A DAY

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Vegetables are loaded with vitamins and minerals, contain fiber, have no cholesterol, and are low in fat and calories. They're a great source of many nutrients that appear to help reduce the risk of

chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes. Eat a variety of vegetables to get all the health benefits.

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#### EAT AT LEAST THREE SERVINGS OF FRUITS A DAY

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Fruits are filled with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber. Except for a few, such as avocado and coconut, they're virtually free of fat. Fruits are a major source of nutrients that may help lower the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer. Choose a variety of fruits to get the most health benefits.

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#### EAT FOODS HIGH IN OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS

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Eating at least two servings (about 4 ounces each) a week of fish that are rich in omega-3 fatty acids — such as salmon, trout, tuna, herring and sardines — can help reduce your risk of heart disease. Instead of frying, bake or grill the fish. Note: The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advises pregnant women, nursing mothers and young children to avoid king mackerel, shark, swordfish and tilefish (golden bass or golden snapper), which are higher in mercury. Tuna steak and albacore tuna generally have more mercury than canned light tuna. Plant sources of omega-3s may not have the same effect. These include canola oil, soybeans (whole and oil) and walnuts (whole and oil).

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#### CHOOSE WHOLE-GRAIN FOODS

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Eating whole grains may lower your risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and cancer. In addition to the more familiar whole grain breads and cereals, add variety to your diet with hulled barley, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur, millet, quinoa, whole-wheat pasta and wild rice.





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