

# Prevention

## Scientists Find Vitamin C May Help Your Skin Look Younger—Here's How

Experts explain the best way to reap the benefits.

BY KORIN MILLER PUBLISHED: JUL 02, 2025 7:30 AM EDT



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Study: This Vitamin May Make Skin Look Younger SrdjanPav - Getty Images

- *Vitamin C may help support the health of the epidermis, the outermost layer of skin.*
- *Getting adequate levels of vitamin C may help fight signs of skin aging, according to recent findings.*
- *Doctors explain how to get more of the essential vitamin in your diet.*

Your skin protects your body from germs and other environmental hazards, but it gets weaker over time. That changes its appearance, leading to visible [signs of aging](#), like wrinkles and fine lines. While you can't do anything to stop your skin from getting older, new research suggests that vitamin C may help skin look younger.

Specifically, having plenty of vitamin C in your diet may help to reactivate certain genes that control your skin's growth and repair. The study, which was published in the [Journal of Investigative Dermatology](#), used lab-grown models designed to mimic human skin. In these models, the skin cells were exposed to air while being nourished underneath with a liquid nutrient designed to mimic the way your skin gets nutrients from your blood vessels.

**Meet the experts:** [Gary Goldenberg, M.D.](#), assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital; [Ife J. Rodney, M.D.](#), founding director of Eternal Dermatology + Aesthetics

The researchers used vitamin C at different concentrations comparable to what would be transported from your bloodstream to the epidermis, which is the outermost layer of your skin. After seven days, the researchers discovered that the skin that was treated with vitamin C had a thicker epidermal cell layer without impacting the stratum corneum, which is the outer layer of skin made up of dead cells. After two weeks, the epidermis was thicker, while the outer layer of dead skin cells was thinner.

This suggests that vitamin C helps to boost the formation and division of keratinocytes, skin cells that move from deeper layers of the skin to the surface, the researchers explained. The researchers also found that skin samples that were treated with vitamin C had more cell proliferation, which is important for maintaining the skin's healthy barrier and creating a fresher look.

"Vitamin C is a promising molecule that can be used as a developing treatment for epidermal thinning, including in aging," the researchers wrote in the conclusion.

The findings raise questions about the impact of vitamin C on skin. So, should we all be having more of it in our lives for a healthier, younger-looking complexion? Here's what dermatologists want you to keep in mind.

### **What is vitamin C and what does it do?**

Vitamin C, a.k.a. L-ascorbic acid, is a water-soluble vitamin. Humans need to get vitamin C from food and supplements, making it a vital part of the diet, according to the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH).

Vitamin C plays a role in several areas of health, including biochemical reactions to support collagen and protein metabolism, per the NIH. Vitamin C also helps with wound healing and is an antioxidant that supports immune function.

Most adult women need 65 to 75 milligrams of vitamin C a day, while most adult men need 75 to 90 milligrams daily. While many adults in the U.S. get the recommended amounts of vitamin C daily from foods and drinks, some are more at risk of not getting enough than others, per the [NIH](#). Those include:

- People who smoke and are exposed to second-hand smoke.
- People who eat a limited diet.
- People with certain medical conditions, like severe malabsorption, certain types of cancer, and some forms of kidney disease.

### **Why does vitamin C help with skin health?**

When you eat or drink something with vitamin C, it's absorbed into your bloodstream and then transported to the skin, explains [Gary Goldenberg, M.D.](#), assistant clinical professor of dermatology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai Hospital. There, it tends to be concentrated in the basal layer of the epidermis, which is the deepest layer of the outer layer of your skin.

Vitamin C is a co-factor (meaning it's a required element) in a process that activates genes that are involved in cell proliferation, Dr. Goldenberg says. "This can lead to epidermal thickening and improved skin health and appearance," he says.

Vitamin C is also crucial for the production of collagen, a protein that helps to support your skin's barrier and enhances your skin's elasticity, says [Ife J. Rodney, M.D.](#), founding director of Eternal Dermatology + Aesthetics. "Collagen is the building block of the skin," she says. "It's the supporting matrix that gives the skin its tightness and firmness, but over the years, it starts to break down. That's why skin gets saggy and thin."

While having more vitamin C in your life won't magically transform your skin, it can help, Dr. Rodney says.

### **Foods that contain vitamin C**

If you eat a lot of vitamin C-rich foods, Dr. Goldenberg says you should get enough of the nutrient to support good skin health. If you could do better, these are some of the most [vitamin C-rich foods](#) to consider eating, per the [NIH](#):

- Red bell pepper, ½ cup: 95 milligrams
- Orange juice, ¾ cup: 93 milligrams
- Orange, 1 medium: 70 milligrams
- Grapefruit juice, ¾ cup: 70 milligrams
- Kiwifruit, 1 medium: 64 milligrams
- Green pepper, ½ cup: 60 milligrams
- Broccoli, ½ cup: 51 milligrams

If you're not sure how you're doing on the vitamin C front or if you're concerned that you may not be absorbing the nutrient properly, Dr. Goldenberg says a blood test can help determine your levels. "If levels are low or not optimal, supplementation can help," he says. However, Dr. Rodney points out that [vitamin C supplements](#) aren't for everyone. "They really don't help unless you're deficient," she says.

### **How topical vitamin C impacts skin**

This study focused on having vitamin C in your diet, but dermatologists say there's a role for [vitamin C serums](#) in skincare, too.

"I like topical vitamin C on the skin—serums, specifically," Dr. Rodney says. Because of vitamin C's antioxidant effect, these can help to protect the skin from environmental stressors, she says, which may contribute to signs of aging. (Dr. Rodney recommends looking for a serum with vitamin C and ferulic acid, which helps keep the vitamin C molecule stable in your products.)

Overall, dermatologists say the findings stress the importance of eating a healthy diet for good skin health. "Nutrition has a direct impact on skin health," Dr. Goldenberg says. "Nutrients like vitamin C can promote skin regeneration, delay aging effects, and maintain barrier function."

*Dietary supplements are products intended to supplement the diet. They are not medicines and are not intended to treat, diagnose, mitigate, prevent, or cure diseases. Be cautious about taking dietary supplements if you are pregnant or nursing. Also, be careful about giving supplements to a child, unless recommended by their healthcare provider.*

SOURCE: <https://www.prevention.com/food-nutrition/a65254637/vitamin-c-makes-skin-look-younger-study/>