

A wrinkle in time: how they appear and what to do about them

By TAKE CARE STAFF • MAR 8, 2015

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Wrinkles can be one of the more irritating changes that come with aging. But where do they come from and why do some people have more or less than others?

This week on “Take Care,” Dr. Emmy Graber explains various methods to prevent wrinkles and how to treat them once they start. Graber (<http://www.bumc.bu.edu/derm/emmy-graber-md/>) is the director of the Boston University Cosmetic and Laser Center. She is also an assistant professor of dermatology (http://about.me/emmy_graber) and the associate residency training director at the Boston University School of Medicine.



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7:56

Graber says a wrinkle is a fold or crease in the skin that becomes apparent over time and can appear due to various reasons.

“As we age (<https://www.aad.org/dermatology-a-to-z/health-and-beauty/every-stage-of-life/adult-skin/what-causes-aging-skin>), we lose collagen, which is underneath the skin and it’s the supporting part of the skin,” Graber says. “We also lose elastin which gives our skin its buoyancy. As time goes on, our collagen weakens.”

Long exposure to the sun, smoking and hereditary genes can also cause wrinkles.

“For most people, if we’re talking about the earliest wrinkles can appear, it’s in their early 20s. For some people it’s much later,” Graber says.

The face seems to be a prominent place for wrinkles, which according to Graber, can be attributed to the large number of muscles in the face.

“The muscles on the face are quite strong, lots of them,” Graber says. “When those muscles move when we’re expressive, the skin overlaying those muscles crinkles. Years of repeated facial expressions and moving those muscles causes multiple crinklings in those areas. It’s like folding a paper over and over again. At a point, a permanent crease becomes etched in.”

There are many types of wrinkle treatments (<https://www.aad.org/dermatology-a-to-z/health-and-beauty/every-stage-of-life/adult-skin/how-to-create-an-anti-aging-skin-care-plan>) on the market, but Graber says a good number of them don’t deliver on their promises. She recommends meeting with a dermatologist to find the right sort of cream treatments (<https://www.aad.org/dermatology-a-to-z/health-and-beauty/every-stage-of-life/adult-skin/anti-aging-products-selecting>) or discuss the costs and benefits of laser treatment. One kind of cream treatment gradually removes the outer layer of skin. Graber says this procedure is safe, but cautions that loss of the outer layer makes the skin more prone to sun damage.

Eating foods high in antioxidants and Omega- 3 fatty acids can also be helpful in preventing wrinkles, says Graber.

Graber also suggests using a lot of sunscreen, even on cloudy days and during the winter.

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