

Wrinkle count

You're likely not protected from the sun by car windows, either, which is why the left side (driver's side) of people's faces often looks older, says Ebling.

Don't smoke

Smoking accelerates the aging of your skin.

"I can pick smokers out any day of the week," says Koenig, referring to the tell-tale wrinkles around the mouth from sucking on cigarettes.

Nicotine also constricts blood vessels, reducing blood flow to the skin, so skin cells get less oxygen and don't multiply normally.

Expressions

Repetitive facial expressions cause wrinkles. Nobody's suggesting you stop smiling. But wear sunglasses both to protect the skin around your eyes and to avoid squinting, says Ebling.

Injections of Botox, and its newer competitor Dysport, can prevent or reverse some wrinkles because botulinum toxin type A temporarily stops facial expressions by paralyzing the muscles in the area treated. But the injections are expensive and must be repeated every four months or so.

Your sleeping position also can cause repetitive creasing of the skin. "You can always tell the side a person sleeps on," Ebling says.

Eat well

Eating a healthy, low-fat diet helps reduce spots caused by sun damage, such as sun-related keratoses that can make you

look older. About 1 percent of those thick, scaly patches develop into a form of skin cancer called squamous cell carcinoma.

Drink water and other fluids to stay hydrated, which will make your skin look less wrinkled.

Moisturize

Skin creams can help by plumping or exfoliating the skin. The ingredients in over-the-counter face creams that have been proven effective to somewhat reduce fine lines and wrinkles are retinols (a vitamin A compound), vitamin C and hydroxy acids (synthetic versions of acids derived from sugar-containing fruits), says McMeekin.

By contrast, products that contain large molecules such as collagen or elastin can't get absorbed by the skin, so don't help, says McMeekin. Vitamin E is a known allergen and not recommended.

Keep in mind that expensive products don't necessarily work better; Ebling mentions that generic versions of skin lotions such as Cetaphil are fine, for example.

Avoid creams with fragrance because they contain alcohol that dries the skin, Ebling says.

Apply facial creams to dry skin so they are taken in evenly by the pores, she says. But for the rest of your body, after a shower or bath pat the skin dry a little — leaving some drops of water on the skin — and immediately apply body lotion, Ebling says. That way all of your skin will be as supple and healthy looking as possible. □

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