



Collagen replacement drink under the microscope

Nutritional supplement Toki is food for thought: Can patients sip away lines, wrinkles, and affects of aging?

By John Jesitus
Staff Correspondent

Allendale, N.J. — A nutritional supplement appears to reduce signs of facial aging such as fine lines and crow's feet. Called Toki (LaneLabs USA), the product has been used by more than 20,000 Japanese women and has been available in the United States since late November. An early study shows the product, taken three times daily in doses of 7.5 grams for 30 days and twice daily thereafter, provides significant improvement for periorbital problems including wrinkles (see article below).

One plastic surgeon who has reviewed LaneLabs' research and marketing materials, plastic surgeon James H. Carraway, M.D., said, "My impression is that LaneLabs is an excellent nutraceutical company. And the people who are reviewing this product are taking a diligent approach to studying its effects in humans — boosting the collagen level in the skin as part of an overall process of boosting blood collagen levels."



Dr. Carraway

Toki, a nutraceutical, includes glucosamine, which has been shown to increase collagen levels in joints, plus hyaluronic acid and vitamin C, which Dr. Carraway stated is a part of the collagen-building process.

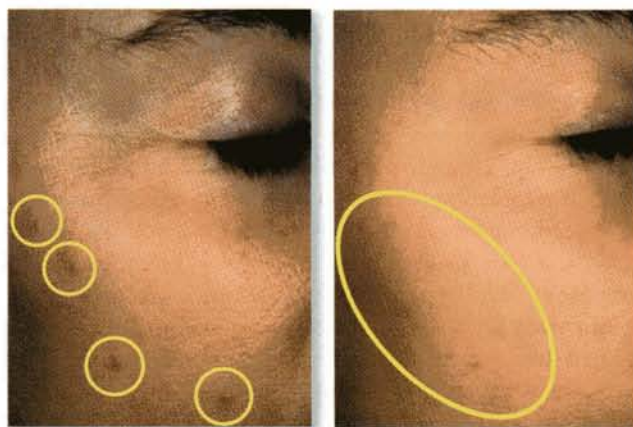
The Toki study of blood collagen levels is credible, added Dr. Carraway, professor and chairman of the division of plastic surgery at Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, and on the editorial advisory board at COSMETIC SURGERY TIMES. "The main findings they observed was better appearance in the face in terms of aging. They felt some of the fine wrinkles were improved, but not the puffiness or bags under the eyes, which you probably wouldn't expect to be. But if you have improved the skin tone with a nutraceutical, then you've made at least one step in the right direction."

No less positive was the assessment of Irwin Kantor, M.D., who, as director of dermatology with Great Neck, N.Y.-based Research Testing Laboratories, oversaw the study.

"The diminished appearance of fine lines and wrinkles was impressive. I was even more impressed with the fading of discolored spots



Patchy discoloration can be seen prior to taking collagen replacement drink (left). After treatment at right.



Patient has four patchy discolorations prior to taking the collagen replacement drink (left). At right, same area after treatment. (Photographs courtesy of LaneLabs.)

on the skin as a result of taking Toki. Our test subjects' skin was clear, and the tone was more even than before. No one experienced any adverse reactions or effects from using Toki."

This product appears to accomplish the



Toki tested for doubting derms

Selling a supplement that promises a more youthful-looking appearance to consumers is one thing. Selling such an idea to dermatologists is another. In this area, Toki's manufacturer relies on data collected from a study performed by Research Testing Laboratories. It will be published in the next few months.

The 60-day study of 32 patients with periorbital wrinkles found statistically significant improvement in periorbital wrinkles and aging, plus overall facial aging, but no significant effect on sagging and puffiness. Patients' self-evaluations, however, reported significant improvement in all the foregoing areas. Blood collagen analysis likewise showed patients' mean levels of this substance up 114 percent.

"What we believe happens is that the collagen [in the drink] provides the building blocks for making more collagen," stated LaneLabs' Dr. Nissen. This process is aided, she continued, by a patented process the company uses to break down the size of Toki's porcine-derived collagen molecules for easier absorption. Additionally, an extract of hijiki seaweed with high amounts of minerals and amino acids is said to increase absorption of Toki's nutrients.

Nevertheless, the consumer market is flooded with nutritional supplements that promise everything from fuller hair to a restored sex drive. But Dr. Nissen stated, "Nobody has anything like this. It's brand-new. That's why some dermatologists are

skeptical." Such was the initial reaction of doctors at Research Testing Labs. But according to Dr. Nissen, they were pleasantly surprised at Toki's results.

"What users experience usually is, about two weeks into the process, is a significant increase in the moisture of their skin and increased tone and radiance," Dr. Nissen said. "After a month, we see the collagen being restored and built up. That helps reduce fine lines and wrinkles, not just in the face, like a cream, but all over the body because you're taking the product internally."

At presstime, the product was selling well at a cost of \$195 for 60 servings. LaneLabs ships product daily, with some customers ordering two boxes at once. CST

desired objective to make the skin look better. However, Dr. Carraway does not feel its collagen production targets the face exclusively. Nor is Toki the only nonsurgical approach to achieving a more youthful appearance.

Similar effects with topical creams

"In my own practice," Dr. Carraway added, "I can change people's diet, put them on supplements, and change their protein:carbohydrate:fat ratio, of their food intake, and they look younger when they come back." Similarly, it's well known that the Mormon lifestyle — which eschews ingested toxins and cultivates spiritual peace — generally results in longer, healthier lives.

Not to be discounted is what Dr. Carraway called the spillover effect. When someone takes a product such as Toki, he said, "they try a little harder" with respect to eating and other habits. As a result, "their

facial tone increases; they feel a little less depressed about their appearance, and they look better," he added.

The Toki test also resulted in an average two-pound weight loss for participants. The company doesn't claim it will do this for everyone. But according to Jennifer Nissen, N.D., a naturopathic physician who is LaneLabs' nutritional research director, this finding assuages users' concerns that the product will cause them to gain weight. Perhaps more importantly, Dr. Nissen said, the weight loss proves that water retention isn't a factor in Toki's results. "Maybe Toki also provides some sort of satiation," she said.

"It has substance to it, so maybe women ate less in addition to taking it because they also lost fat."

Other Toki benefits stem from the fact that it includes a full day's supply of calcium. "Most women need to supplement their calcium," Dr. Nissen said. "So they're

kind of getting a double effect out of this." For such reasons, she stated, "there are really a lot of health benefits from taking Toki long-term. It's really not going to hurt you — it will definitely help at more than a skin-deep level."

Nevertheless, it's not known how long the product's effects last. For this reason, LaneLabs recommends taking it indefinitely and is planning additional research in the future, possibly assisted by Dr. Carraway. Upon reviewing the company's current materials, he offered to conduct clinical research to corroborate Toki's effectiveness.

"I'm impressed with the thoroughness of the study, with the product, and with the LaneLabs company," he said. CST

For more information

■ LaneLabs, Allendale, NJ
www.888ageless.com ☎ 1-800-510-2010