

Wrinkles

Wrinkles and sagging are age-related skin changes. Lifestyle has a major effect on the skin's tendency to wrinkle. Sun exposure and smoking are the most common causes of premature skin wrinkling. If you limit sun exposure and avoid smoking, you can reduce the amount of wrinkles you develop.

Why skin wrinkles

Wrinkles and sagging are age-related skin changes. Elastin and collagen fibres give the skin suppleness and strength. The numbers of these fibres in the skin are reduced as we age, causing wrinkles. Our skin has a layer of fat just below the surface (subcutaneous layer), which gives form and structure. This layer of fat thins out as we age, causing the skin to sag.

Wrinkles and sun exposure

Sun exposure is the most common cause of skin damage and wrinkling. Exposure to the ultraviolet (UV) radiation in sunlight causes changes to the skin. UV rays prompt the formation of free radicals, among other things, which contribute to wrinkling and skin cancer. People with fair skin tend to experience more age-related skin changes, such as wrinkling, than people with dark skin. The best way to prevent wrinkling caused by sun exposure is to:

- Wear protective clothing
- Avoid the sun around the middle of the day
- Use sunscreen for the parts of skin that can't be protected by clothing.

Smoking and wrinkles

As well as all the other health risks associated with smoking, smokers will have more wrinkles. These changes may not show up till you are in your 30s or 40s but they will happen. Research has shown that people who have never smoked have less wrinkles than smokers.

Where to get help

- Your doctor

Things to remember

- UV radiation from sunlight is the major factor in wrinkling skin in Australians.
- Cigarette smoking is also a factor in premature facial wrinkling.

This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:

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