

## What Are Wrinkles

There are physical signs that show that a person is aging. A man for instance may lose hair or slowly change to grey. Our skin shows signs as well and to understand it, we have to know what wrinkles are.

The skin is made up of 3 layers namely the epidermis, the dermis and subcutaneous tissue. The outer layer namely the epidermis becomes thinner and less sticky as we age. This in turn causes dryness and as this decreases by 10% per decade, it takes more time for the skin to repair itself.

This also affects the dermis because less collagen is produced and the elastic fibers which provide us with elasticity also wears out which is why our skin also sags. We don't sweat that much as before as there is a decrease as well in the number of sweat glands.

Now that we know where it can happen, we can describe what wrinkles are simply as ridges or creases on a surface.

But is aging the only cause of wrinkles? The answer is no. Studies have shown that exposure to ultraviolet light, UVA or UVB accounts for 90% of skin aging. This varies depending on race because of the person's pigment protection.

A few other studies have shown that wrinkles can also be caused by environmental factors. Examples of these include cigarette smoking and pollution as this may hasten aging by producing oxygen free radicals. These are particles produced by many of the body's chemical processes and when it is produced in excessive amounts, it can damage cell membranes causing not only wrinkle but other skin disorders as well.

Rapid weight loss may also cause wrinkles since you reduce the volume of fat cells that cushion around the face that will make the skin sag.

Now that we know what causes wrinkles, can it be treated? The answer is yes. Some dermatologists recommend retinoic acid which is applied to the skin to fill in the crevices. There are also things people can take such as topical creams and ointments to peel off the top layers of the skin, dermabrasion which is a procedure to sand the top layer of the skin, injecting collagen or botulinum under the skin and laser surgery.

Can anyone pursue any of the treatments mentioned? The answer is no. This depends on the patient's age. Whichever you choose, you should ask the dermatologist how effective is the procedure, is it safe, possible complications

and the experience of the professional.

In some cases, a combination of these procedures is necessary. The best part is knowing that this causes uniform destruction and shedding of the old damaged superficial skin cells so the healthier deeper cells will take their place on the surface.

There is not much that people can do to prevent wrinkles because this is normal as we age. But we can slow it down by staying indoors between 10 am to 4 pm when the sun is the hottest and washing the face with a mild non-soap cleanser. The skin should be patted dry and lubricated at once with a water based moisturizer ideally SPF30 filter to prevent further dehydration.

Now that you know what wrinkles are, we can take steps to delay it from happening or just accept it for what it is. After all, aging is a fact of life all of us will one day face.