



About wrinkles

To understand wrinkles and why they affect your skin, it is important to understand how your skin functions and the important role it plays as part of the body.

Skin is the human body's largest organ. It is durable enough to resist breaking and tearing but soft enough to allow movement. Depending on the area of the body it covers, skin varies in texture and thickness (e.g. eyelids are thin and soft but the soles of the feet are thicker and harder). Skin reflects your general health and well-being. When you are unwell often people will notice because of your skin.

Skin has many functions. It cools the body and is our first defence against bacteria and other organisms. Skin also provides a waterproof covering for the whole body and houses all of the nerve endings that allow us to feel pain, pleasure, temperature and pressure.

The skin, wrinkles & ageing

The skin often gives away our age before other parts of the body. While age-related changes are natural, some can be reduced. Many people accept that changes to their skin are part of the normal ageing process.

Signs of ageing

Some of the signs of ageing skin can include:

- **Wrinkles** – the combination of reduced elastin and collagen with thinning skin means high use areas of the skin particularly on the face (like the eyes, mouth and forehead) are especially prone to lines and wrinkles.
- **Blemishes and age spots** - pigment cells (melanocytes) can increase in certain areas and form age and liver spots. Areas exposed to high or regular amounts of sun commonly develop age spots.
- **Spider veins and broken blood vessels** - blood vessels in older, thinner skin may become permanently widened making it harder to retain body heat. They may also frequently break and bruise.
- **Scaly, dry skin** – With fewer sweat glands and oil glands, older skin is less lubricated. This leaves it prone to drying causing a 'rough' appearance and itching.
- **Sagging** - older skin is more likely to sag and droop because it produces less elastin and collagen. This makes it more prone to the effects of gravity (e.g. bags under the eyes).
- **Thin, paper-like skin** - the number of new skin cells being produced slows as you get older causing the epidermis to become thinner. This causes the skin to become crepe-like and wrinkle.