

How Skin Ages

'What's happening to my skin?'

It's a common question from patients concerned about the unwanted - and often premature - signs of aging skin. As you know, there are multiple factors contributing to these signs. The following is a quick review.

It's About Cellular Turnover

Skin's top layers act as a protective barrier for the body, keeping harmful disease and pollutants out and essential body fluids in. At the deepest layer, new cells are formed that begin to migrate up toward the skin's surface. There, they are eventually exfoliated.



In young, healthy skin, this cellular turnover process takes about 40 days: 28 days to reach the surface and 12 days to slough off.

In young, healthy skin, new skin cells are well organized, uniform in size, shape, pigmentation and structure.

The Changing Functions of Aging Skin

Over time, skin accumulates damage from many sources - such as sun exposure, hormonal changes, trauma, pollution and more. The functions of young, healthy skin start to break down.

On the surface, aging skin becomes discolored, lax, wrinkled, dry and rough. Cell turnover slows, reducing the availability of essential nutrients. Moreover, instead of producing healthy new cells, skin functions now produce cells that are abnormal.

Below the surface, collagen and elastin production slows. Collagen becomes disorganized, less dense and coarser and loses its uniform construction. This, combined with degeneration of elastin in the dermis, causes skin to wrinkle and sag. Less blood flow and moisture result in the dull, lifeless skin patients complain about.

Correcting the Signs of Aging Skin

Fortunately, transforming aging skin function is possible. Obagi System has been proven to improve skin functions and transform skin so that it looks and acts younger and healthier.