

Collagen and the Conscious Diet: A Collision Between Two Fast Growing Trends

Not-for-profit AminoFacts calls on collagen producers to be more transparent about the animal sources used in their manufacturing process

Illinois, Chicago, Jan 20, 2021 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - AminoFacts, an independent, non-profit organization that brings transparency to sourcing and production processes around food grade amino acids, has reviewed leading collagen and collagen-boosting supplements through the lens of ethical consumers who observe conscious dietary practices.

AminoFacts has turned its eyes toward collagen supplements, as they are a popular and growing category – in 2020, in the United States alone, consumers were expected to spend \$293 million on collagen supplements, up from just \$50 million in 2014, an almost a six-fold increase.

At the same time, Americans are also becoming more plant-based, socially- and environmentally-conscious consumers. The vegan food market, for example, was valued at \$14.2 billion in 2018 and is expected to climb more than twofold, to \$31.4 billion, by 2026. [\[1\]](#)

According to AminoFacts spokesperson and Board Member Mitch Kanter, Ph.D., *“Many consumers may not be aware that collagen supplements are made with materials derived from animal parts; and many have fillers and other additives, which begs the question: how are these two trends squared”*

How collagen is made

Collagen is manufactured from the inedible parts of slaughtered animals – including fish silage, hooves, hair, skin, feathers and teeth from cows, pigs, chickens and the like. Many products, if not all, are hydrolyzed – they go through a chemical process that breaks down the collagen protein into peptides, which are short chains of amino acids that are more readily absorbed into the body. The chemicals can be harsh agents such as hydrochloric acid.

While these animal sources and chemicals may sound a bit unappetizing to most people, it’s even more so to those who support animal welfare and/or practice plant-based lifestyles.

Labels are not always helpful

Labels on some popular collagen supplements will often create messaging around features that are true for every product in the category, using terms like gluten-free, dairy-free. In fact, the

animal-derived amino acids found in collagen do not contain any of these types of ingredients. Some brands also claim to be keto- and paleo-friendly, and yet, except for the rare product that uses maltodextrin to prevent clumping, all collagen is carb-free. Additionally, “preservative-free” is just a marketing ploy – collagen is processed and packaged in a way that does not require preservatives.

Importantly, very few collagen products disclose how they treat the animals from whom the products are sourced. Practices can range from the cruel to common, to anywhere along with the Whole Foods “step scale,” where “Step 1” is the lowest rating for suppliers who want to be certified: “no cages, no crates, no crowding,” and “Step 5+” is the highest: “animal-centered, entire life on same farm” with extensive outdoor access. Learning about which countries collagen brands source their animal parts can be an

indicator of their level of conformance to both emerging and established U.S. standards.

“The supplement market is a bit behind the food industry in terms of providing consumers with specific and consistent information about what they’re putting into their bodies,” said David Madsen, Ph.D. and AminoFacts Board member. *“In the case of Collagen or any other supplement, it is important for consumers to know what questions to ask, and how to decipher labels to find answers.”*

There are plant-based alternatives

There are many products on the market that are plant-sourced and truly vegan that are formulated to help your body produce its own collagen. As plants do not contain collagen, these products can be described as “collagen enhancers” or “boosters” that blend a combination of some of the amino acids (such as glycine, proline, hydroxyproline, and arginine) found in animal collagen along with other ingredients, such as vitamins and minerals, that can be used to help the body generate collagen.

These products can also contain various vitamins and minerals along with specific amino acids, such as glycine, proline, hydroxyproline, and arginine.

Most plant-based products use a relatively natural method, fermentation, to create the amino acids. This plant-based process is usually less harsh than animal hydrolysis, as it uses natural microorganisms in a broth that creates the amino acids from plant materials.

AminoFacts has investigated some of the brands offering plant-based alternatives, based upon the information on their labels and supplemental information supplied by the manufacturers. The organization is also offering all consumers to submit their favorite brand for an evaluation. Information can be found at aminofacts.org.

About AminoFacts

AminoFacts is an independent, non-profit organization that brings transparency to sourcing and production processes around food grade amino acids, a significant ingredient in many dietary supplements, so that consumers know more about what they’re putting into their bodies. The organization was established as a response to comprehensive public opinion research in the San Francisco metropolitan area that showed little knowledge, even among active supplement takers, of where amino acids are sourced and how they are made. AminoFacts is dedicated to providing information on the industry’s sourcing and manufacturing trends, along with information on leading U.S. brands. The organization’s advisors include experts on supplements, regulatory requirements, and manufacturing processes for food-grade amino acids, as well as scientists and leaders within the food and dietary supplement sectors.

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