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CAFÉ TO OPEN IN CITY, WILL PIG'S FEET KEEP YOU PRETTY? By Beth Landman

THE BEAUTY-ADDICTED have long loved collagen, rubbing creams into their skin and plumping up lips and cheeks with injections. Now there's a movement to eat the stuff. Himi Okajima, whose restaurant Himiyabi in Japan was one of the first to introduce collagen cuisine, will open Hakata TonTon in the West Village next month, where he'll serve foods rich in the protein responsible for skin and muscle tone. "Collagen helps your body retain moisture," Okajima says. "Your hair and skin will look better, but it's not just for looking beautiful now. If you begin eating collagen in your thirties, you will look younger in your forties." Hakata TonTon will concentrate on dishes made with pig's feet, including spring rolls, pasta, and a hot pot that also contains chiles meant to cleanse your intestines. (Shark's fin, a common collagen-rich ingredient in Japan, was deemed too expensive to serve here.) Does it work? "No question, ingesting collagen has a positive effect on joints, muscles, skin, and hair," says Upper West Side-based celebrity nutritionist Oz Garcia. "People add collagen powder to their protein shakes, and even years ago our mothers ate Knox gelatin, which contains collagen, to strengthen their nails." Dr. Ellen Gendler, an Upper East Side dermatologist, isn't convinced. "There's no evidence that this does anything beneficial," she says. "The only way collagen definitely works to improve your appearance is by injecting it."



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