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## 116 – Hyaluronic Acid for Joints, Skin and Eyes

Interview and transcript sponsor

Transcript:  
Interview with Darren Landis

**HEALTH QUEST** PODCAST



Hyalogic.com



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**Steve Lankford:** Hello and welcome back to Health Quest. I'm your host Steve Lankford. Thanks for joining me. I'm glad you're here. I have what I know is going to be an interesting interview for you today. I'm going to be talking to Darren Landis. I've known Darren for a number of years. I've met him through one of our national trade shows in the natural products industry. My wife uses several of his products. I've known about his role in a product called Hyaluronic Acid and that's going to be our topic for today. Darren is also a certified respiratory therapist; he has a BS degree in Allied Health Sciences. He's the president and co-founder of Hyalogic.

Hyalogic is a company that specializes in the research of high molecular weight Hyaluronic Acid, also known as HA. Like many products, not all Hyaluronic Acid products are equal. We're going to discuss the science, the differences, and the uses in human nutrition. Darren also has an interest in its use in animal health and Hyalogic makes product for animal health as well. We see a broad range of benefits to this particular nutrient is one that I'm sure many of you started hearing about if you haven't already started using it. In that capacity, I've invited Darren Landis to be my guest today here on Health Quest. Darren, welcome.

**Darren Landis:** Steve, thanks for having me on.

**Steve Lankford:** It is my pleasure. You and I talked a long time about getting together for this interview and I'm glad we're finally doing it. There's so many interesting benefits and uses to HA. Before we get into that topic though, tell our listeners a little bit more about your background and how it is that you became interested in this particular nutrient?

**Darren Landis:** My background is in the medical field. I'm a respiratory therapist. I did a lot of home care therapy. Always visiting people in the home and helping them out and teaching them how to breathe and working with them. One day a friend of mine came to me and he said, I'm thinking about getting in to the natural products industry. I'd like to create some products. We could go out and help people. I started thinking, a lot of these people that I take care in the home, they could sure benefit from having some vitamins and supplements that might keep their body even healthier.

We start looking at different products out there. At that time we knew that there seem to be an area that we were looking at for the joint health side of things. We were thinking, if we could find something that would help a lot of these people with their joints because it seemed like every time I'd go to their homes, their joints were not feeling very good and they were slow to get up and they were using walkers and canes and things like that. We start thinking of ways that maybe we might be able to help with their joints and we start finding ways to look at Hyaluronic Acid and we created a Hyaluronic Acid type product that we were testing out.

Just started researching Hyaluronic Acid, we had so many people come to us and they said, this product that you're making, it has Hyaluronic Acid and it is great for my joints but I'm reading about it and I know that it's got so much written and researched on the skin. It's great for the skin and it's great for the eyes and all these different things. We start creating skin care products. We start creating a variety of different supplements that contain the Hyaluronic Acid for different uses. Somebody might want to take Hyaluronic Acid to keep their eyes healthy or make their skin look good.

Whatever it might be, we even got lip balms and shampoos and a variety of different things. That's how we got started in this industry and I've just been kind of every night it seems like I learn something new about Hyaluronic Acid because I go and start researching every night and there's always something new about this Hyaluronic Acid that I find. I don't believe that we've discovered all the benefits to it but that's been my passion as they continue to research and find out more about this Hyaluronic Acid.

Steve Lankford: Your company has been one of the leaders in the industry. Tell us a little bit about your company.

Darren Landis: Steve, we got started back in, it took us about 2002 or three years before we started to really see the impact of getting a product out on the shelf and starting to work with health food stores. We're based out at Kansas City. We've got a lot of people here in the office that had been with us studying out this Hyaluronic Acid for years but our goal is to continue to keep producing more and more Hyaluronic Acid based products. The name of our company is Hyalogic and our motto is making logical, beneficial solutions for the body utilizing Hyaluronic Acid.

It's because Hyaluronic Acid is located everywhere throughout the body and it provides a benefit to almost every body part, there's a lot that we can accomplish by continuing to bring great and effective products to the marketplace.

Steve Lankford: When you started this, was there much awareness of Hyaluronic Acid at that time or did you really have to teach people what this was?

Darren Landis: I always tell people when I'm doing training for them, we first started back in that 2000, 2001 time, we were calling up health food stores and talking to doctors and we were saying, what do you know about Hyaluronic Acid? Most of them were scratching their head and they were saying, I don't really know much about it. When we'd say did you know that it's everywhere throughout your body? Did you know that your body is making Hyaluronic Acid

right now and that the promise is we start to lose it as we got older? Everybody is like, no, I didn't know anything about that.

We pretty much felt like we were pioneering new ground and teaching people about this Hyaluronic Acid molecule. I think if you still go out and talk to consumers and ask them what they know about Hyaluronic Acid, they're probably going to tell you, not a lot. Once you start to mention what it does for the body, they're like, okay, I get that, I understand that and then they basically say, if it's nature's moisturizer for the body, give me a whole bunch of it. I need it all. Where can I get this stuff?

That's what we're finding out with the health food stores. They're getting more and more customers that are coming in and asking for Hyaluronic Acid based products because you're just seeing more and more research out there on it. Like with all good ingredients in the marketplace, it usually takes about 10 years for it to really gain the popularity that it does.

Steve Lankford:

This is the history of all nutrients really if you go back to when it was first isolated, and first articulated, many of the companies that I interview here on our Podcast, they talk of decades-long research that leads up to the new wonder nutrient. A lot of hard work goes into something before it ever gets to the point where it becomes a product. Then from there, to teach people about it, this is what the nutritional industry has been about forever. It's looking for these innovative raw materials, these nutrients that have this benefit and then introducing them to the marketplace.

It's what the natural products industry does best in my opinion and we're at an age where the science is there that we can look at and we'll explore some of that science about HA as we go forward in today's program. Let's talk about the role in human nutrition. What is HA and what is its role in human nutrition?

Darren Landis:

Great question. We have so many people that say, what do you guys sell? We say, Hyaluronic Acid based products. They classified as an acid but it's close to neutral in pH. It's very compatible with the body if you apply it topically overall. What we're talking about is a molecule that is naturally occurring in the body. As we're sitting here talking right now, your body and my body were naturally putting together this Hyaluronic Acid molecule. We got these little factories in almost every little cell in our bodies that are sitting there working hard and making these little Hyaluronic Acid molecules.

Now, again, our body produces it but there's a thing that were starting to see and a lot of the research were starting to show that as we age, for some reason these little factories just don't produce that Hyaluronic Acid like they used to. When we're not producing this Hyaluronic Acid which is considered nature's moisturizer for the body, it loves to bind the water in the body and it creates very thick viscous fluid gel for the body. It's almost located everywhere in the body.

It's in the skin. It's inside of the eyes and inside of the joints and surrounding all of our cells in the body. This water-loving molecule that can bind up to a thousand times its own weight in water just hydrates the body overall but if we're not making enough of it as we age then we start to have a deficiency in the body. Then we start to get a little bit concerned because we're losing the moisturization for the body. We're looking for ways that we can help the

body maintain healthy levels of HA, applying it topically in skin care products or taking it orally, that's basically the gist of this molecule overall.

It's considered nature's moisturizer but I always tell people, it's a water thickener. It loves to thicken that syrupy water in our body so that it stabilizes and space fills and cushions the body overall.

Steve Lankford: It sounds to me like it's a kind of a molecule that holds moisture in place. Like if you have an apple and you cut an apple and you let it sit, it starts to dry out. It loses its moisture, it shrinks up, it gets tougher and if you put it back in water, it rehydrates. Is that a good visualization of what Hyaluronic Acid does? Does it hold this water that makes things plump and fleshy?

Darren Landis: Absolutely. I guess another good visual that you could think of is this molecule of HA simply looks like a little rope underneath the microscope. We actually call it a long-chain sugar polymer or long-chain sugar carbohydrate in the body. Our body naturally makes these little long-chained sugars. A lot of times, if I'm at a trade show, I'll drag a 20-foot long rope with me and I'll throw it out across the floor and show people this is what the molecule of Hyaluronic Acid looks like.

It looks like this long chain rope-like molecule. They're scratching their head and they're thinking, okay, what's so important about that? I say, everybody agrees that HA can bind up to a thousand times its own weight in water more than any other molecule that we've seen out there in the human body. The way that it can grab to so much water as it takes on that long rope-like appearance. I always say, this rope is a visual of what this long-chain sugar molecule on our body looks like but I said, the long rope gives it enough room for binding the water.

It can bind water all up and down that long rope and it just fully saturates that rope. Then I say, we're going to layer that rope back and forth and back and forth and like little three-foot sections on top of one another and now we've got water resting on top of more water on top of more water on top of more water. When those water molecules rest on top of one another, they Velcro to one another, they hang on for they're life. That's what creates the real thick, syrupy, gel fluid that's in throughout our body. The last I checked, you can't squeeze liquids, if you try and squeeze these thick syrupy liquids, they push back and they say, no way, you're not going to squeeze me.

It's a great space filler and a shock absorber and a moisturizing agent for wherever it's at in the body. We know that it's throughout the whole body that it provides benefits.

Steve Lankford: It does seem to be something that is ubiquitous in the body. We can perhaps extrapolate some of these benefits that we're seeing are existing in all of our issues but I know that there's been some clinical works and studies on some very specific body functions and structure using HA that have revealed some very interesting benefit. Give us an overview of some of those targeted areas.

Darren Landis: Some of the areas we're seeing people looking at, they're coming into the store, talking to the nutritionist or they're looking for Hyaluronic Acid to benefit their joints. Also, now,

they're starting to realize that this Hyaluronic Acid is the moisturizer for the skin. They're looking for topically applied products, skin-care type products. Then we're also seeing people say, this is that same thick gel fluid that is naturally occurring in my eye. I want to take HA to make my eyes healthy.

The big areas are going to be the joints and the skin and the eyes. We talked about it being ubiquitous. It's throughout the whole body. You're starting to see a lot more interest in other parts of the body. Wherever it's at it provides moisturization, people are just getting excited about this HA.

Steve Lankford: Is HA different than some of the other supplements that people might take for their joints or their skin? There are a lot of different things that people hear about but they don't always work in the same way. They have different properties. Where is it that HA is different from some of these other nutrients people might be more familiar with?

Darren Landis: We're talking specifically for the joints. I think you've seen a lot of people. They get the concept that this HA is a water thickener and we got this syrupy, thick, watery fluid that's in our joints and we want to maintain that syrupy, thick fluid gel. It's the motor oil for our body. We want to keep it nice and healthy. We want to maintain the health of it. We want to keep it going. That cushioning gel fluid is composed primarily of Hyaluronic Acid and water and we call that fluid the synovial fluid, the lubricating fluid for the body.

People say, I want to keep the motor oil on my joints. I want to keep my body lubricated and I'm looking for joint supplement that might be focusing in on maintaining healthy lubrication and healthy joint function. That's what HA does. A lot of other products work on different ways but HA is the motor oil or the lubricant for the joints. I think that's the reason why we're seeing more and more people look for a Hyaluronic Acid supplement.

Steve Lankford: Well, it's a different type of nutrient. HA doesn't necessarily do what say, an anti-inflammatory herb might do or some other approach. The way I picture this is that HA is one of the very important nutrient that does what HA does. Other nutrients do what they do but it's not the same thing. We might be able to get benefits for our joints, our skin, our eyes using additional nutrients but it's not the same benefit. The take away in my mind is that we look at all of the nutrients that provide unique benefits and HA being one can be part of a more comprehensive program that looks to support joints and skin and eyes. Is that a fair way to look at it?

Darren Landis: Absolutely and I think the first thing that we want to do when we're looking at our joints and if we've got some concerns, first thing you want to do is do you have healthy lubrication? That's the key function I think that people need to look at first and I will say it's in almost all every joint structure in our body too, we're not just talking about those knee joints or those hip joints. You name it, there's other parts where this lubricating fluid is present.

Steve Lankford: Is it likely if somebody takes HA for their joint problems that that same product can reveal to them benefits in these other areas?

- Darren Landis: In the beginning, we were promoting Hyaluronic Acid specifically for the joints. We were saying, hey, this is a great product to take to keep your joints healthy. We had people coming to us and saying could this be making my skin hydrated and moisturized because my skin feels really healthy. We're saying absolutely, Hyaluronic Acid is naturally present in your skin. It's the space-filling, moisturizing sponge in your skin. How about my eyes? I feel like my eyes are just in great shape now too. We said, could possibly be. That's how we started creating different products because we started seeing the benefits of HA in other parts of the body besides just the joints.
- Steve Lankford: What are some of the forms that HA come in as a supplement or a topical product, there are various delivery forms?
- Darren Landis: Absolutely, there's a whole bunch of different delivery forms out there. Lots of good HA product in the marketplace if you're going to take it orally you're going to see it in a capsule form, a liquid form, maybe some type of a gummy bear type form of an HA product that might be out there in the marketplace that you would take on a daily basis. That's the key with all supplements is that you do want to take it on a daily basis if you want to get the benefits of those products but on the skin care side, it's starting to range pretty widely.
- It used to be that somebody said, hey, we can use it as a face cream, but now you got shampoos and conditioners and lip balms and facial scrub. You got all kinds of skin serums that contain Hyaluronic Acid, that moisturizing gel that you can apply topically and it's very compatible with the skin. You got to think, there's a large amount of HA in our body that's already present in our skin. We're just losing some of it as we age. When you apply topically, people will always say, wow, that just feels really nice. Seems to go and moisturize my skin very nicely. Those were the main areas that we're starting to see for this Hyaluronic Acid.
- Steve Lankford: If somebody is using it as topical application, my wife uses it for example on her face and she's really liked it over several years now how it makes her skin feel, should she also consider taking it internally or does using it topically satisfy the body's need or do you need to also then attack it by taking it internally so that it's coming from the inside out?
- Darren Landis: The big trend in the natural products industry is beauty from within. People are saying, hey, I want to take supplements that are going to help keep my skin healthy. We're seeing a lot more supplements that are being taken to keep their skin healthy. We see people taking Hyaluronic Acid specifically just for keeping their skin healthy. A lot of people are coming in and they'll say, we're using your skin care product. I want to keep my skin hydrated and moisturized. Do you think I need to use one of your supplements?
- It's up to you. You could consider it. It's probably not a 100% necessary so they'll test it out and some people come back and they'll say, I like taking it orally and applying it topically. I feel like I'm doubling up and really benefiting my skin. Some people say, you know what, I'm just taking it and applying it topically and it's working very well because it's just nature's moisturizer for the skin.
- Steve Lankford: Yeah, just if you're just looking really for those external results that certainly could be a reasonable application but for listening to what you say about it being throughout the body,

I think the idea of taking it internally seems to also make good sense] helping your joints and so on. How long should somebody give it a try if they are using either the topical or the internal dosing, how long does it take for them to typically notice some results?

Darren Landis: I think it's been fair and it's something that we talked through at the company here. We said, hey, give it a shot, give it one bottle, try one bottle whether it would be one of our skin care products or whether our supplement product, try one bottle. If you don't feel like you are seeing results that you are looking for then go look for something else or try something else because HA is one of those moisturizing molecules for the body that you really should start to feel some moisturizing, hydrating benefits for the body within that first one month's supply.

We never tell people to double up on buying a whole bunch of product and one bottle I think is fair. There are so many great products out in the marketplace.

Steve Lankford: If one bottle is enough for people to be able to see some results, that's what we want people to get the idea that how was this helping them and is it helping them in a noticeable way? We certainly want them to take the recommended product in the recommended dose for the recommended length of time, that's how they're going to know. Have there been clinical studies with HA?

Darren Landis: There's been a lot of research, just go do a search online for Hyaluronic Acid or sometimes people just simply put in HA and hopefully that will come up because that's how people say Hyaluronic, they just shorten it and say, HA but if you do just a search online, you're going to find a ton of research out there and information. You got to remember, we talked about this molecule being ubiquitous. It's throughout our whole body. Because it's everywhere throughout the body, it affects a lot of different parts of the body.

There's research for keeping healthy body function for your skin and for your eyes and for your joints and for your circulatory system and your nervous system and all these different things that are out there how does HA can provide benefit to the body.

Steve Lankford: Now, your HA is described as high molecular weight in the literature that I've got. Why is that important? Does it suggest that there are other forms of Hyaluronic Acid that are not high molecular weight and does that make a difference?

Darren Landis: We do know that there's a variety of different high molecular weight, low molecular weight, medium molecular weight molecules of HA out there in the market. It's always been our belief just from what we've read and studied out and looked out that a high molecular weight molecule was more beneficial to the body overall. Let me just explain what we mean by that just to break it down in the simplistic terms. Let's say we take a 20-foot long rope that I was telling you about. I lay that out across the floor.

Boy, it's got a lot of room for grabbing on to that water. I would consider that 20-foot rope being a high molecular weight molecule. Let's say, we bring out the scissors and we cut that 20-foot rope into little two and three-foot rope sections. Those smaller rope sections would be considered low molecular weight. Guess what, they can't bind as much water and they can't layer as much and they can't create as much of a thick, syrupy, gel solution for the

body. In our belief and the research that we look at, that high molecular weight is the molecule that's most beneficial to the body.

The larger the rope, the more water binding the more cushioning, the more hydrating that we feel it offers to the body. That's why we've always looked at, let's try and use that high molecular weight in everything that we do and let's watch and make sure that in all of our formulas that we keep it high molecular weight that we make sure that protect that molecule right inside of a cream, inside of a liquid supplement or whatever it might be that it stays high molecular weight.

Steve Lankford: You also suggested that HA is good for people's pet. Describe the benefits for pets as well. What kinds of products do you have?

Darren Landis: We make primarily one product line. It's for the feline, canine and equine so they're cats, dogs and horses and it's a joint supplement line. We know that animals obviously need help with keeping their joints healthy and a lot of people came to us and they said, we've been given this glucosamine. We've been doing this and this and this but we're not sure if it's working or we're looking for maybe something new. We started to introduce the Hyaluronic Acid in a liquid supplement form for animals. We start testing it. We started watching these animals.

Animals are pretty good. If they're feeling better, they're going to show you that they're feeling better. We are really encouraged with the benefits or the results of what we were seeing with animals using Hyaluronic Acid. I mean these dogs were moving around very freely and comfortably and some of our customers even said, it looks like their coat is more hydrated and shinier than it has been before. You're seeing a lot of people looking for Hyaluronic Acid and a joint supplement for dogs now.

I think we mentioned earlier that sometimes we're seeing, takes a good number of years for the product to reach the marketplace where people start to recognize it, that's what we're seeing with this Hyaluronic Acid. It's come through the animal side a little bit, went through the horse side quite a bit. Almost everybody who owns a horse has understanding of Hyaluronic Acid. They're very knowledgeable. Now, you're starting to see it come through the small animal side, the dog and cat side but it's been really prominent on the human side.

You're seeing more and more people. Glucosamine has been pretty good but I'm looking for something that might even be a little bit better. We're finding that people really like Hyaluronic Acid.

Steve Lankford: Yes. It's different than Glucosamine. That speaks to my previous point that if Glucosamine has helped you terrific that's what we all want but if it hasn't been fully beneficial, if you still have other issues, it may be the Hyaluronic Acid that you're missing. Certainly as we all age which is when we start to feel more and more of these problems, our skin isn't as elastic and hydrated as it used to be. My wife, I'd used her as an example. She has joint issues and she has concern about her skin. As she gets older, she wants to keep it supple and soft and hydrated. She's been using the Hyaluronic Acid for them.



The ones that are applied topically and she also takes it internally along with her Glucosamine. She's added that as an adjunct to her tissue support. Certainly, I've seen it in my own family and I've known a lot of people who have used the HA and it is continuing to emerge as an important product. Are there any contraindications or warnings for anybody who maybe on a medication or has a particular health condition, anybody that should be careful about trying HA?

Darren Landis: The FDA has got some nice forms out now that you could fill out online and you can take them to your doctor and you can show him all the different supplements that you are taking. We've not noted that there's any supplements or any contraindications with medications or with any other vitamins and supplements we're taking HA. Why, because it's naturally occurring in the body. If you take it as a vitamin or a supplement or if you use it as skin care product, the body basically says, wait a minute, I recognize you. You're pretty much all over throughout the body.

It doesn't sense it as some type of a foreign substance that you're putting into the body but it's always been our recommendation that you do document, you do write down what you're taking and that you do let your doctor do that because there are times where there are some vitamins and supplements you're taking that might not be appropriate for your particular health status overall. We haven't noted anything that the people need to be concerned about.

Steve Lankford: Well, I think your point is very important. If you are under a doctor's care. If you are taking any medications, talk to your doctor about any changes that you want to make. Make sure that the products you're interested in are compatible with your health and any treatments that you're under. It only makes good sense to work with your primary care provider so that you make sure that you're getting the best of all possible outcomes, your medical, your prescriptions, your supplements, your lifestyle, all of that is important. It all works together to create a better state of health and so we encourage people to do that. That just makes the best sense.

Darren Landis: Well, I think that make sense too because if you look at the trends and the statistics out there, they talk about, I think it might be somewhere in the 60 and 70 percent range of people that are taking vitamins and supplements and using skin care type products on a regular basis. It might be even higher than that. It might be multiple vitamins and supplements that you're taking along with different medications. It's always good to keep track of all that and to make sure that you keep that organized and that your doctor knows about it.

Steve Lankford: Yes and it's important for people to become informed about their own health. Often time people just don't ask enough questions and they don't understand what is this nutrient doing for me? What is that care providing me? The more you know about your health and your conditions and what you're dealing with, the more able you are to put together a nutritional program that works. That's what we're all about here. We think it's important to know what the nutrients are that have been scientifically validated and how to use them and what to expect.

That's what we're trying to bring to our listeners here on Health Quest. Certainly, you've done a good job today to introduce us to this very novel and interesting nutrient, Hyaluronic Acid. We're getting near the end of our time now Darren and I'd like to give you the last word, is there anything that we didn't cover today that you want to make sure that our listeners hear?

Darren Landis: I think we can break it down into some real simplistic things. I always recommended people to go do their own research that they might hear from somebody on a radio show or listen to a lecture but I always tell people do your own research. Go out and look for yourself, to see what's out there. I'm confident that you're going to find a lot of good information out on the internet and in your library and different places even talk to your healthcare practitioner. You would just say, what do you know about HA and ask around. I think you're going to find a lot of the stuff that we talked about today is scientifically backed up with a lot of research and information out there.

HA is the motor oil or the cushioning gel for our joints. As for the skin, we want to rehydrate that raisin and take it back to a grape because that's essentially what happens, we lose this moisturizing space filling gel for the skin and our skin starts to take on that wrinkled, sagging appearance. We want to rehydrate that skin back to that grape and that's what this HA does.

Steve Lankford: Certainly, that's what my wife is using it for and I have to say, I'm pleased with her results. She has soft skin and I love to touch. It's working for her. We can certainly recommend that people try it. As far as we know, it's not harmful, it's not incompatible with other things that they may be doing and it provides benefits in an area that are observable. I think that's so important. Sometimes we don't know how well something is working but in the case of your joints, you can feel it. In the case of your skin, you can see it and feel it. There are important indicators for you as well. Does your company have a website that consumers can look to?

Darren Landis: We do. It's Hyalogic.com, [www.hyalogic.com](http://www.hyalogic.com). One of the things that I always recommend is go visit your local health food store, walk in, pick up some products, look around, ask the staff inside of the store, what do you guys know about these different products? What do you know about Hyaluronic Acid because you've got a lot of knowledgeable staff at these health food stores that understand and they can really help you to decide which product to choose from.

Steve Lankford: That is where you'll find the educated and interested store owners is at the independent natural health food stores and certainly we support their efforts because they are the ones that take a real personal interest in understanding the nutrients and the differences and which ones are good and how to put together a nutritional program. That's a very important service and we endorse that as well. We are strong proponents of the independent natural products retailer. As gatekeepers, they know the good products and they know what to recommend.

I endorse what you just said about finding that out. Darren, it's been most interesting. I know there's a lot more to talk about in terms of how these things can be used and perhaps

we'll have future conversations on those topics as well. I'd like to thank you so much for being my guest today. It's been most interesting.

Darren Landis: Well, I appreciate you having me on and thanks for your many years of work in educating the consumer. Thanks a lot.

Steve Lankford: You are very welcome and thank you and take care, until next time. Bye-bye.

Darren Landis: Bye-bye.