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Wrinkle Reduction and Skin Rejuvenation

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How and Why Skin Ages

For as long as one can remember, it has always been the pursuit of many to keep their youthful looks, even at great costs. And in this day and age, the trend has not changed. Now more than ever, methods, techniques and treatments meant to retain that “youthful glow” proliferate everywhere. As it is the most telltale sign of getting old, anti-aging goods and services account for billions of dollars spent in the hopes of delaying the onset of skin aging.

Unfortunately, many have been and are misinformed on how and why the skin ages misleading these same people into buying products that only offer short-lived, if not unsuccessful and disappointing, results.

It is therefore only smart to know just how the skin develops over time. In understanding the hows and whys of aging skin, the correct habits and treatments can then be developed to retain as much one's youthful looks for as long a time as possible.

First off, there are two types of aging for the skin. There is the intrinsic (internal) aging, which is caused by factors within one's own body, such as genes and body condition; and extrinsic (external) aging, which is caused by factors outside one's body, such as sunlight and lifestyle.

Intrinsic (internal) aging

Aging is a natural process and our genes determine how one goes through that process. For some, aging can set on earlier or later than most. On average, signs of skin aging begin to appear in the mid-20s.

As one grows older, the skin's ability to snap back to shape (elasticity) starts to decrease. That is because skin cells do not regenerate as fast as they used to - resulting to tougher, older skin. Although internal aging begins in one's 20s, the typical signs of wrinkles and sagging skin do not appear for until about a couple of decades more.

Other signs that indicate skin aging are thinning, loss of firmness, dryness, and reduction of sweat production that prevents proper cooling of the body.

Extrinsic (external) aging

Factors outside one's own genes accelerate skin aging. Lifestyles and habits carry more impact of why aging skin occurs more prematurely in one's lifetime.

Sun exposure

With the present condition our atmosphere is in, harmful rays from the sun pass through in ever increasing amounts causing damage to the skin and hampering its ability to repair itself. Over a period of time, a few minutes a day of exposure to ultraviolet rays results in changes to the skin (freckles, age spots, rough skin). An even graver symptom would be the onset of skin cancer. Dermatologists call this effect photo aging in reference to the sun's rays that reduce the production of collagen responsible for maintaining the skin's elasticity.

One's susceptibility to photo aging is determined by the amount of pigment in the skin as well as the frequency and duration one spends

under the sun's rays. Given these factors, fair-skinned individuals and those who spend long periods under the sun stand to have more pronounced effects of photo aging compared to those who are darker-skinned and spend more time in the shade.

Facial Exercises

Ironically, the routine once prescribed to prevent facial wrinkles is actually one of the causes of that very thing one aims to avoid. Facial exercises cause the muscles on the face to fold and crease the skin. As the skin's elasticity decreases, the skin starts to take on the creases more permanently causing deep wrinkles on the face.

Smoking

Cigarette smoking does not only cause harm to the body internally but externally as well. This is most pronounced with the condition of the skin. Nicotine intake causes changes in the body that speeds up the break down of skin cells, among other harmful effects.

It is a common finding that individuals who've been smokers for at least a decade look comparably older than those who do not smoke. In addition to wrinkles, yellowish discoloration of the skin has been observed in smokers. However, the good news is that those who have

given up smoking show improvements in their skin condition shortly after quitting.

The signs of skin aging will inevitably show up on everyone at one point or the other. All sorts of products and treatments can be availed of but it is only meant to delay the outward symptoms.

Perhaps the best solution is to understand the aging process and not view it as a disease, but rather see it as another stage of development the body undergoes - a solution that requires no prescription and is free of charge.

Know Your Own Skin Type

As it is with everything else, knowing the condition of the different parts of your body is the first step in caring for it. Skin is no different. Knowing your skin type is the beginning of giving your skin the proper treatment to maintain good skin tone and condition.

Your skin type is a general description of how your skin feels and behaves. The most common types used for commercial products are normal, oily, dry and combination skin. Other categories include blemish-prone, sensitive and sun-damaged skin.

Convenient as these skin type categories are in choosing products, it is not exactly the best way to know and understand your skin on a level that will really help it. This is perhaps the reason why, even though the “right” products have been used for your designated skin type, you still experience either dryness, oiliness, acne and other problems.

Why is this so? First of all, you have to remember, like any part of your body, your skin is never the same all throughout. It goes through all sorts of conditions depending on several factors, some of which include your genes, your lifestyle and habits. Add to this the fact that the problems you are experiencing may not be simply the result of lack of care. There are cases when skin diseases are the reasons.

So from here on end, it will be good for you to forget what beauty magazines, cosmetic salespeople, and aestheticians tell you about the four skin types. It’s about time you go beneath the surface and really know what your skin is about.

First off, know the factors that influence your skin type. This can get tricky since almost everything can influence your skin and the condition it’s in. Just looking and feeling your face is not enough to

determine your skin type. To get an effective evaluation of your skin, consider the following.

The first set of factors affecting your skin are those within your own body. Hormonal changes brought on by your body's development influence your skin to a huge extent. For women, the menstrual cycle can cause drastic changes on the skin. The same goes for periods of pregnancy and menopause. Men are also subject to these influences, especially in the puberty stage as hormones causes the body to develop.

Your genes also influence the propensity to acquire a certain skin condition that is characteristic of your parents' own skin types. However, as their skin is also influenced by different factors, your skin and theirs may not necessarily be the same.

Lifestyles and habits also affect your skin and while these may seem external to your body, the way you conduct daily activities such as diet, exercise, smoking and drinking habits influence your body and therefore your skin as well.

Other influences affecting your skin lie outside your body such as weather and climate as well as your skin-care regimen of choice. The

climates of areas you spend prolonged periods in influence how your body reacts. Cold climates tend to cause dry skin and flaking whereas humid areas cause excessive sweating and oil production.

The skin care products you choose also affect your skin condition. Using creams or moisturizers that have too much emollients will cause your skin to be oily whereas strong cleansers and exfoliates result in dry, sensitive skin.

Now that you know what influences your skin, it is time to know what condition it is in.

First of all, don't evaluate your skin right after you've washed your face. This is because your skin is reacting to the water and cleansers you've put on it. Wait four to five hours after you've washed. This will give your skin time to recover from the cleansing and allow it to resume its "normal" activity. Also try to do this on a day you had not worn any makeup or put on creams so a more accurate evaluation can be made.

Take a piece of facial tissue and press it on different areas of your face. Hold the tissue against the light and if blotches can be seen, then

you have oily skin. This is the reason why you should carry out this assessment when you are not wearing makeup or moisturizers since the oil may be caused by these substances.

If the general area of your face appears dry, feels tight and can see patches of skin flakes, then you are dealing with dry skin. On the other hand, if you observe that some areas are both dry and oily then you have combination skin.

Now that you know the degree of oiliness or dryness your skin has right now, you need to know whether or not your skin is suffering from some form of skin disease.

Are there areas of redness around your nose and cheeks with red bumps and blemishes but aren't pimples? Do you see fine lines of capillaries on the surface that are sensitive to the touch? If yes, you may have rosacea. Patches of irritated, dry, red to white scaly and crusty skin around the hairline, nose, eyes and cheeks may be caused by a skin disorder called psoriasis. In both cases you will need to consult with a dermatologist. .

With these evaluations, you develop a more effective skin care routine that will help maintain your skin's health. But remember that your skin

type won't remain constant for long even with the right choice and use of products. As your own body undergoes development, your skin type will change as well. It is recommended that you perform this simple assessment every 4 to 6 months.

With proper attention and care, you can give you skin the right treatment when and how it needs it – something that is far more effective than any repair cream or fancy treatment at a clinic.

Treating Oily Skin

Whether a teenager or an adult, oily skin has been the bane of many people just like you. No one likes that greasy feeling and the dirt that accumulates on your face, not to mention the shine that makes you cringe at the idea of flash photography. But there is a solution to this problem and one that is simpler and surprisingly gentler than what you may previously have thought.

First of all, you need to know what causes oily skin. Overactive oil glands that produce the substance, sebum (a natural skin lubricant and moisturizer) are the main culprits. As too much sebum accumulates, it becomes thick and heavy in texture making it feel

greasy. Left unattended, oily skin becomes the basis of excessive shine, pimples and blemishes.

But while there is a down side to this condition, there exists a good one as well. Skin with active oil glands tends to be less likely to show wrinkles and other signs of aging compared to other skin types. This is because the oil keeps more moisture in the skin making it more supple and elastic, therefore there is less wrinkling. So while you may fret and moan about your skin's oiliness, it may be a blessing in disguise 10 to 15 years from now if proper care is given today.

But left untreated, this skin type leads to clogged pores, blackheads, and buildup of dead skin cells making it difficult to have clear healthy skin. It also causes a sallow-looking complexion and makes having large, visible pores very likely.

For now, there is no quick-fix solution to successfully treat oily skin. Patience is your best tool since you are addressing not a surface problem but one that is inside your body. Success may take a while to achieve and in some cases may actually need professional medical attention. And in most cases, the condition is simply put under control and never totally resolved. Even then, the skin will improve its

condition and the objective to not have greasy shiny skin will be closer than ever.

First thing to do in treating oily skin is to get rid of the excess sebum on your face, without total drying out your skin. Too much washing and "degreasing" can actually make things worse since stripping your skin of oil will cause your oil glands to work overtime in producing more sebum.

The correct and balanced method is to clean the skin with a very mild detergent or surfactant. It should not contain oils or other "fatty" substances that can increase the oily condition you already have. This kind of product removes the greasy feel of too much sebum and cleans away the surface grime that has built up because of the oil.

Some products contain small amounts of AHA (alpha hydroxy acids) that gently remove dead cells from the surface exposing a fresher layer of skin. Use this on a regular basis to get the intended results. Follow this up with a light (no creams and oils, preferably a water-based) moisturizer just so that the drying effects of the cleanser can be compensated for.

Use a mild astringent or toner everyday to clear off excess oils on your face. Avoid the stronger alcohol-based products. Even if you feel that it gets rid of more oil from your face, just like with the cleansers, you are actually encouraging more production of sebum if you dry your face out completely.

To prevent clogging, cleanse at least two times a day but do not scrub hard, as you will hurt your skin more than helping it. A slight pressure from your fingers is friction enough to slough off the dull, dead skin.

With oily skin, moisturizing need not be done everyday. But on the occasion you face feels tight due to cleanser and toner use, apply a light, oil-free moisturizer. Avoid products that contain substances as mineral oils and cocoa butter as they are too emollient for your skin condition.

For your makeup, choose oil-free products, especially for your foundation and blush. Go for water-based and non-comedogenic products that will not clog your pores. Some foundation products are designed to absorb oil, which can control the shiny look during the day.

As it is with any skin type, do not forget to apply sunscreen (NON-oil based, of course). There are alternative forms of sunscreen out there, and gel is becoming a popular choice since it is less greasy than conventional sun block lotions. To be effective, your sunscreen should be at least SPF 15.

If you have severe breakouts of acne, use cleansers that contain a mild amount of salicylic acid that clears your skin. Moisturizer containing the same substance is also a good follow-up.

Finally, try to watch your diet as well. Refined starches, sugar, and processed foods may aggravate your naturally oily skin. Choose food that is low in fat and eat more fresh fruits, vegetables, and grains. Drinking lots of fluids (6-8 glasses a day) of water, juice or teas maintains good skin tone. Keep your vitamin and mineral intake up especially with vitamins A, C and B complex.

It will take time for your skin to get into shape as far as being less greasy. But the effort and discipline you put in will pay off. And as mentioned before, as you care for your greasy skin now, the benefits of less wrinkled, dry skin will follow you years later.

Treating Dry Skin

Weather can be one of your skin's worst enemies, especially during the winter season. As we go through this dilemma, we should remember that there are numerous factors aside from the one mentioned above which put your skin to the normal condition of wear and tear.

Effective skin care and treatment are way to keeping your skin younger-looking, supple and full of moisture. The purpose of putting yourself to an effective skin regimen is to minimize the incorrect habits of skin treatment and the factors that injure the skin and causes irreversible damage.

Xerosis

Dermatologists use the term "xerosis" to describe dry skin. In more severe cases, skin moisture is nearly absent thereby resulting to characteristic cracking, scaling and itching called pruritus.

The above conditions are brought about by the skin lacking the required moisture to prevent the aforementioned results. The skin needs a relative amount of moisture to maintain smooth or

suppleness, flexibility and protection.

If the skin is not sufficiently moisturized, harmful UV rays get into the skin easily and travel all the way down the delicate subcutaneous tissue and subsequently make your skin vulnerable to damage.

Causes of Dry Skin

In order to avoid the many activities that jeopardize your skin's health, it is important to identify the many factors which result in the unwanted condition.

- Avoid Using Soaps with Harsh Ingredients – Regular soaps such as anti-bacterial and deodorant soaps, which are non-moisturizing, dehydrate the skin and rob your integument with essential oils which lock moisture from your body.

Products containing alcohols also dissolve skin lipids and cause the skin's moisture to evaporate resulting in skin dryness. Water and oil-based products are perfect for your skin. Use Dove Olay and other soap substitutes available at your local drugstore.

- Washing with Hot Water – Although water is an effective moisturizing agent, it also strips your skin with valuable oils or lipids which are responsible for retaining moisture from your skin.

Frequent bathing, especially with hot water, removes valuable oils and exposes your skin to infections by destroying your body's first main line of defense.

Once this is lost, your skin will become more prone to organic attacks by pathogens and sometimes cause irreversible damage to your skin.

If you are used to bathing with hot water and cannot resist the temptation, try replacing it with lukewarm water to lessen the effect of skin dryness.

- Frequent Washing – Frequent washing and bathing, usually more than once a day depletes your body with moisture and natural oils. Also, limit your bathing time within 15 minutes.

- Weather – Winter is one major factor in the development of a dry skin. The use of humidifier, in most cases, solves the problem of the effect of the climate. It compensates for the insufficient humidity

needed for the preservation of skin moisture.

This is because cold air cannot afford to hold adequate amount of water to serve skin's moisture demands. Warm air on the other hand holds enough humidity to keep the skin moisturized at a certain level.

- Patients under medication – People taking diuretic drugs remove water from a patient's body because the kidney will less likely reabsorb the water filtered through it. In this case, frequent intake of water is needed.

- Genetic Disease – People afflicted with a rare genetic disease called ichthyosis are likely to develop dry skin. This genetic disease has no cure and the goal of treatment is to secure the symptoms that manifest along the way.

Effective Treatment

The skin deserves much attention for it manifests your overall health or state of well-being. It provides you with valuable clues as to how you take care of yourself and how much attention your skin gets in your daily physical management.

One way to maintain that youthful glow is to subscribe to a skin treatment regimen that will help your skin restore moisture when it's needed.

Most reasons for dryness are bacterial and fungal infections, which do not go away until proper prescription drug treatment is administered. But in reasons not tied up above, products available in the market will help you achieve that goal and maintain a skin that is envied by everyone.

- Alpha hydroxyacid lotions are best for dry skin. Oil-based are more effective than water based lotions for they "lock-in" the moisture stored in the skin.

- Effective moisturizers are dependent on your immediate and long-term needs. If you want to relieve itching caused by dry skin, ordinary moisturizers will serve your purpose.

Humectants such as lotions containing glycerin, propylene glycol promotes moisture retention and allantoin and urea are effective for promoting healing and stripping damaged cells on top of the skin.

- Barrier creams are effective for people who are in a habit of washing their hands frequently. For individuals with advanced dry skin condition (pruritus), anti-pruritic agents such as oatmeal and tar-based pine oil are beneficial.

- Balanced-diet and exercise cause your skin to produce more oil and maintain a relative amount of oil that keeps moisture in your skin. Drinking plenty of water is also important.

If these and other treatments are not effective in alleviating all the symptoms of drying skin, it is best that you consult a professional dermatologist so they can closely monitor the cause of dryness.

Double Whammy - Combination Skin

Skin types vary so as the type of treatment tailored to meet their needs. Some have normal, oily or dry skin and each remains the same even if temperature changes.

For some, cold, frigid weather could turn an oily face dry in minutes. This is because cold air does not carry enough moisture to moisten dry surfaces, especially the skin, and eventually makes the skin less damp

and more prone to scaling.

There are many skin regimens to preventing double whammy situation to set in. More often than not, our daily skin treatment and cleaning behavior influences the way our skin maintains moisture and inhibit dry skin symptoms.

Moisture is the key to a wonderful, healthy-looking skin. Being fair-skinned does not always suggest good skin tone but the amount of moisture your skin possesses implicates how you take care of your integument.

Appropriate Skin Treatments

Given the fact that people with combination skin possess dry and oily skin scattered in different areas of the face (in most circumstances), each skin type should be treated as it is: dry skin treated with ointments and medication for dry skin and oil removal creams for oily skin types.

Areas of the skin that are dry should be gently cleansed, preferably with cold creams and pat dry with towel without rubbing and wash

with lukewarm water.

Oily parts should be thoroughly cleansed and kept dry to avoid breakouts of acne. Oily areas are so sensitive that any incorrect application of medications and creams may cause acne and other irritations to erupt.

There are specially made products created for each skin types and your dermatologist can you provide you valuable details about which facial products will best suit your skin as each skin requires unique treatments.

Moisturizers for Combination Skin

Skin of all types should remain moisturized. A considerable degree of dampness should be maintained to make skin less liable to infections that tend to attack the skin.

While we consider that both skin types, oily and dry, require a certain level of moisture, the oily portion demands greater care and intensive cleansing.

Greasy skin is more prone to bacterial attacks resulting to acne for bacteria thrive on these areas. Oil produced by your sudoriferous glands (oil glands) contains cellular debris which is an excellent breeding ground for bacteria.

If your skin is too oily, bacteria may feed on this part and multiply as a result of continued nourishment. If any of these microorganisms gets in the way to the skin pore, multiply and deposit sedimentary toxic material, it clogs the pore and eventually initiates infection.

Oily, Dry skin and Essential Oils

Remedies for both skin types are accorded with different kinds of medications. For oily skin, oil-removal skin care products for oily skin are applicable, and oil-based skin care products for dry skin are required for skin lacking the minimum moisture requirement.

Dry skin is a result of a low sebum (oil) level on the skin which makes the skin unable to retain enough moisture. Oil locks in the required moisture to maintain structural flexibility and protect the skin, at a certain degree, from harmful rays of the sun.

If the skin lacks any of these characteristics, you will experience the feeling of "tightness", burning sensation, itchiness, irritability, and increased sensitivity to texture and temperature.

This condition may be a result of improper caring of the skin including but not limited to too much scrubbing, too much exposure sunlight, frequent washing, poor diet, chemical vulnerability, hereditary condition as in ichthyosis, and other preexisting medical condition such as seborrheic dermatitis, psoriasis, eczema, hypothyroidism, and medications such as diuretic drugs, antihistamine, etc.

Oily skin poses a lot of problem for most people. Skin looks dull; pores are enlarged and prone to blemishes such as blackheads. If left untreated, it may result to acne infections. Greasy-looking skin are more common for people who are pregnant, uses oil-based cosmetic products and people with varying or unstable hormone levels.

Like most traits, oily skin can be traced to parents and are inherited. Diet and weather also induces one's skin to become oily.

Having all this information at hand, you will be able to choose essential oil that is compatible with your skin type. Essential oils are best in

supporting treatment for oily and dry skin. Essential oils makes skin trap the right amount of moisture needed to maintain healthy skin, with fewer blemishes, and inhibit the growth of other microorganisms, etc.

For oily skin, you can choose either or a combination of any of the following essential oils: Geranium, Bergamot, Juniper, Cedar wood, and Sage. Cypress and Frankincense are also nice alternative. Lemon is excellent and all natural.

Rose, Patchouli, and Hyssop are best for dry skin. Lavender and Geranium can be used for both types of skin and people with history of allergic reaction to scents. For some, Ylang-Ylang and Sandalwood are also used.

How to Protect Skin

No one can deny that having a healthy, fair skin is critical to a living a perfectly wonderful life. It frees you from the wrath of symptoms caused by skin diseases.

Skin is perhaps one of the most important parts of your body for it protects you from a host of diseases that may pose a threat to your existence.

It is our body's main line of defense. It guards you from all infections and insulates your body from the ever-fluctuating external environment in order to keep a relatively stable body temperature.

It is the body's main point of contact to the outside world, sending constant information to the brain about pain, heat, texture, cold, etc.

With this in mind, there is no doubt that proper skin care and staying away from skin damaging activities will do yourself and your skin particularly, a big favor.

Skin Cancer

Like most part of our body, the skin is also likely to develop cancer. Cancer is a result of an uncontrolled cell growth in one part of the body.

Unlike normal cells which are programmed to divide, grow, and die at a certain time, cancer cells lack the internal machinery to control growth and as a result cause severe damage to normal cells that will be outnumbered along the process in a certain biological locality.

Technically, the body reacts in many ways to cancer cells but this abnormality causes other diseases to suffer nutritional death. Cancer cells were found to cause the body to produce numerous blood vessel connections along the cancerous portion thereby depriving normal cells with nutrients.

Some cells even detach from their point of origin and travel to other parts of the body to start a new colony of cancer cells.

Skin cancers are either melanoma or non-melanoma cancers. Non-melanomas are cancers which arise from skin cells other than melanocytes cells. Melanomas are cancerous melanocytes cells that produce melanin, a pigment that gives the skin its characteristic color.

UV Rays

The sun is one of the key enemies of the skin. Although sunlight helps

the skin synthesizes vitamin D (cholecalciferol), excessive and prolonged exposure to the sun causes damage and wrinkling.

How does the sun cause such damage?

Sunlight that passes through earth is composed of visible light and ultraviolet light (UV). UVA and UVB Light are one of the most common ultraviolet lights. UV light falls outside the visible light spectrum, meaning, the human eye cannot see this type of light and can only be seen using a sophisticated tool which detects different light wavelengths across the light spectrum.

The difference between the two UV light lies in their ability to damage skin cells. UVB light doesn't get through the deeper layer of the skin and accounts for visible burns and DNA damage across the top layer of the skin.

UVA light, on the other hand, penetrates through the deeper layer of the skin and activates free radicals (very reactive substances), which cause small damages to the skin. Cumulative damage accounts for the skin's premature aging.

SPFs, Lifestyle and Diet

There are misconceptions about skin color. People believe that the fairer you are, the more you are likely to suffer burns caused by exposure to sunlight. That may be partly true, but overexposure to UV light can cause serious skin problems.

If you go outdoors and cannot avoid exposing yourself to the harmful sunrays, the following recommendations will surely save you from the aftermath of excessive sun exposure:

- Wear protective sunscreen – More and more people are starting to realize the importance of wearing lotions with Sun Protection Factor ingredients (SPF). SPF's sunscreen lotions are effective in blocking UV lights from penetrating through your skin.

Intensive application should be made on exposed spots of the body such as the lower arm and legs, ear lobes, nose, feet and the face. Choose sunscreens that contain a high amount of titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, benzophenone, oxybenzone, sulisobenzone and/or butyl methoxydibenzoylmethane known as avobenzone (Parsol 1979).

- Wear Protective Fabric - Tightly woven clothing are effective in warding off unwanted UV rays. Today, some fabrics are labeled as how effective they are in intercepting UV rays. Hats with wide brim also confer a great amount of protection.

- Minimize Unnecessary Exposure and Tanning – Unavoidable sun exposure such as recreation or as part of occupation is one of the hazards of everyday life and increases your risk of developing skin cancer later in life.

If these cannot be avoided, make sure to wear protective clothing and wear sunscreens appropriate for a certain activity and your level of exposure. Increasing SPFs means increasing protection.

Cosmetic tanning also poses the same kind of risk due to UV-induced damage. It uses UVA rays and does not cause obvious burns. The amount of damage is comparable to UVB rays which cause visible tanning and damage.

- Eat Right – Maintaining a well-balanced diet is critical to the maintenance of a healthy skin. Your grandma may have said it once to you but fruits and vegetables contain excellent skin rejuvenating

ingredients.

Fruits and Vegetables contain anti-oxidants such as vitamins C, D and E. These organic foodstuffs bind with highly reactive free radicals and neutralize them. They insulate the body against unwanted damage caused by these extremely injurious chemicals.

Whole grains, seeds, nuts, fish such as tuna and salmons are excellent sources of fatty acids and essential oils and keeps the skin hydrated. Fatty acids acts like a bullet vest in preventing UV rays from penetrating deeply into the skin causing too much damage.

- Fluids such as water and juices also keep your skin hydrated and minimize the effect of sun exposure. Research shows that dehydrated skin are more prone from burns and structural damage.

Protecting the Skin from the Sun

Yes, enjoying a sunny day on the beach is fun. However, when going out without proper skin protection one is risking himself of having skin diseases, one of which is the dreaded skin cancer. So to maintain the healthy, youthful glow of one's skin, it is indispensable to understand how the bad effects of the sun's ultraviolet or UV rays come into

action.

The UV-A and UV-B rays penetrate clouds, thick layers of glass, a meter of water, and the layers of the skin. UV-B makes the skin's top layers to release chemicals that permit the blood vessels' expansion and cause some fluid to leak, resulting to inflammation, pain and redness known as sunburn. This damage can occur within an approximate of only 15 minutes and can continue to worsen for up to 72 hours after sun exposure. The damaged skin cells in the process will die and "molt off" in sheets or pictures. Peeling is the process in which the body disposes of dead skin cells. UV-A are the rays that get into the deeper layers of the skin. This affects the living skin cells under the surface of the skin. These rays not only bring about long-term damage such as sagging, wrinkles and discoloration, they also give way for the early stages of skin cancer.

Here's some "geek speak" that's worth some brow-burning. The UV rays act like chain saws, shredding deep into the DNA (the genetic material, with a very precise structure, specific order and specific coding) found within the cell nuclei. Repair enzymes within the cell act by countering the damage done on the DNA chain in shortest period possible. This damage and repair happens simultaneously and

continuously with the tempo of the repair keeping up with the extent of damage being inflicted. But just like any other mechanism within the body, these repair enzymes have their limits and reaches the point that they can no longer work. When the damage is too much (which occurs even before the skin turns red), the enzymes cannot cope. The result is a dismantled DNA structure which alters the coding and leads to the abnormality of skin cells or what is termed as mutation. This is the first step of the formation of cancer cells. UV-rays also contribute to the formation of superoxides which are extremely toxic chemicals the speeds up skin cell ageing.

So who exactly are those in the threat of having skin cancer? People who have already experienced three or more bad cases of sunburn before reaching the age of twenty and regular sunbathers who always crave for an instant tan have greater risks of acquiring the dreaded skin disease known as melanoma. Cricketers, farmers, golf players and others, who have long exposure to the sun, have more tendencies to have milder forms of skin cancer.

So after learning how the body reacts to sunlight here is some information on how to prevent its harmful effect.

Ironically, studies on skin care show that Vitamin D, with the help of sunlight exposure, is what can help the body combat skin cancer.

So how does one go out in the open without the paranoia of cancer haunting him? Dermatologists suggest the use of sunscreens.

Researches showed that exposure to sunlight sans sunscreen should be less than 10 to 15 minutes at noon, while the sun is at its strongest. Using a sunscreen with an SPF or sun protection of 15 or higher is recommended. People with sensitive skin and the older adults should use an SPF of 30 or stronger because their skin tends to burn more easily. People with allergies or sensitive skin should also take note of the ingredients and choose those that are free of chemicals, dyes, preservatives, and alcohol.

If sun exposure will be particularly high, using a stronger sunscreen like zinc or titanium oxide is the better option, as it will completely stop sunlight from reaching the skin. Sunscreen application should be about half an hour before getting exposed into the sun and reapplication should be done every few hours. And when going swimming, one should know that 98 percent of the sun's rays can pass through water, so without some kind of "water-resistant" sun screen

and frequent applications, sunburn might be inevitable.

The skin is meant to protect and shield one from the threats of the environment so unless one properly cares for it, it won't do its job that well.

Skin Creams and Wrinkles

The skin is an indispensable structure for human life. Because it forms a barrier between the internal organs and the external environment, the skin participates in many vital functions of the body.

The outer surface consists of stratified layers of dead, "keratinized" cells that form an effective protective covering against the penetration of noxious substances from the outside environment. The protective function is further enhanced by the oily and slightly acid secretions of the sebaceous glands, which discouraged the growth and multiplication of many harmful bacteria.

Underlying this tough outer layer or the epidermis are the dermis and subcutaneous tissues that, far from being homogeneous, are composed of a multitude of tissues, which are supported and

maintained in proper relation to one another by means of fibrous and elastic connective tissue.

Obviously, the skin, rather than being a single organ, consists of groups of organs, each responsive to its own particular stimulus, and each vulnerable to any harmful influence that would threaten it elsewhere in the body.

Once these so-called harmful influences had taken so much effect in the skin, the resulting product would be numerous dermatological problems like wrinkles.

Although wrinkles are more associated with the dermatological clock of the skin, it is still considered as the resulting product of the greatest effects of harmful influences in the skin. One of which is the damaging effects of the sun. Prolonged exposure to it can prematurely age one's skin.

Usually, wrinkles appear when the skin has already lost its elasticity and firmness. This is usually brought about by the harmful effects of the sun and other environmental factors. It is also brought about by the loss of fatty tissues in the skin's innermost layer.

Hence, medical and skin experts contend that applying topical creams and other skin creams are best for the skin's regeneration process.

Basically, skin creams consists of substances that help the skin to regenerate its lost fatty tissues and elasticity. It has special components that specifically aim at the targeted areas in order to stimulate the skin to produce collagen and elasticity. These two elements of the skin are the ones responsible in the restoration of the innate moisturizing ability of the skin.

However, not all skin creams are created equal. There are some factors that need to be considered when choosing skin creams that will best work for wrinkles. Here are some of them:

1. Choose skin creams that contain the necessary components that will work best on wrinkles.

There are many skin creams that are made to remove wrinkles. However, not all of them are created equal. Therefore, it would be better to choose skin creams that contain the necessary ingredients that will work best on wrinkles. It is best to choose skin creams that

contain essential oils and anti-oxidants such as the grape seed that will help rehydrate the skin's natural moisture.

2. Choose a skin cream that contains Vitamin C.

Vitamin C is not only good for the bones and teeth but also best for the skin. In fact, Vitamin C has long been proven to fight and prevent wrinkles. It helps to counteract skin ruptures caused by the harmful rays of the sun.

Moreover, Vitamin C is known to produce collagen, the known protein that contributes to the skin's strength.

3. It is best to choose skin cream that can be easily absorbed by the skin.

One of the factors that will affect the efficiency of the skin creams is its ability to penetrate quickly into the skin. It is best if it can seep through the innermost layer of the skin.

Hence, even if the skin cream contains most of the necessary ingredients needed to cure wrinkles but the fact that it does not

penetrate easily into the skin, the whole treatment is useless. It has to work thoroughly inside the skin in order to produce the lost elements due to damage.

4. It has to be hypoallergenic.

As mentioned, not all skin creams are created equal and not all skins are the same. Hence, there are some instances wherein some skins are really sensitive and can generate adverse reactions once there are some components that they cannot tolerate.

So, it would be better to use skin creams that contain hypoallergenic materials or natural substances that will work safely on the skin.

Indeed, even if the skin has the natural ability to heal itself, it still needs some help from other substances that are usually contained in the skin creams.

It is true that people can never wash away years but skin creams can help the skin rejuvenate itself to a better state.

Good Nutrition and Your Complexion

As the old cliché goes, "Health is Wealth." Hence, it is always important to uphold the value of proper eating and living a healthy lifestyle in order to stay in shape and to be perfectly well.

However, being healthy is not only constrained on having a perfect body. In fact, aside from having a perfect body, being healthy could also mean having a healthy skin as shown in the skin's complexion.

That is why, most people who are known to be health buffs are also known to be good-looking people. This is because the inner beauty radiates and exudes deep from within, even without the traces of make up.

Nowadays, looking good is not anymore a factor of being vain but is already considered one way of staying healthy. This is because many medical experts are now insisting on the fact that good nutrition is, indeed, an important factor in having a good complexion and image.

In reality, many people are not aware that good nutrition is a great factor in generating a healthy good-looking skin. They only thought that eating the right kind of food would make people healthier and live

life longer. What they do not know is that good nutrition is also a big factor in having a good complexion and healthy skin.

Therefore, for people who are not aware why good nutrition is important in maintaining a healthy skin complexion, here are some reasons that they should be aware of.

1. Eating foods that are rich in vitamin A is important in maintaining a healthy skin.

A daily dose of vitamin A is proven to be an effective way of reducing the appearance of acne, wrinkles, and other skin problems.

However, care must be properly observed when taking foods rich in vitamin A. Too much intake of this vitamin may result to serious problems like liver diseases.

2. Good nutrition replenishes the lost vitamins and minerals that the human body is not capable of producing.

When people are exposed to the sun the skin's reservoir of vitamin C goes down, and unlike most animals, humans cannot make vitamin C.

Therefore, it is important to reproduce vitamin C by eating foods that are rich in vitamin C. In this way, the skin will be able to combat the harmful effects of the damages caused by the sun's ultraviolet rays.

3. Eating foods rich in antioxidants is definitely good for the skin.

In order for the skin to work against the upshots of oxidants or the free radicals that are manufactured when the body cells burn oxygen in order to generate energy, it is important for the people to eat foods that are rich in antioxidants. These foods are the "green, leafy vegetables" like the spinach.

Antioxidants are also present in foods that are rich in carotenoids like beta-carotene. A good example of this is carrots.

It can also be present in food supplements such as vitamins E and C.

4. Eating foods rich in fiber can also contribute to good skin complexion.

Fiber, or roughage, is composed from the plant's cell wall material.

Whole grains, legumes, citrus fruits, nuts, and vegetables are all good sources of dietary fiber.

On its basic sense, fiber is an example of complex carbohydrate that is relatively essential in the absorption of the other nutrients into the body. Without fiber, some of the nutrients will only be put to waste and will not be consumed by the body.

Hence, with fiber, the skin's complexion will be healthier looking and will even produce healthy glow.

5. For proper growth and production of new skin cells, proteins are the best sources in order to help in this process.

Proteins are chains of amino acids responsible for the skin's cell growth and maintenance. Protein in foods from meat, poultry, fish, and dairy is called complete protein because it contains essential amino acids necessary for building and maintaining skin cells.

Thus, a properly maintained skin cell will result to a good skin complexion.

Indeed, eating right does not merely produce a healthy body but a healthy skin as well. Hence, people should be more aware of what they are eating because it will surely reflect on their skin's appearance.

As most people say, "You are what you eat."

How Free Radicals Damage Skin Cells

For those who haven't heard about what free-radicals are yet – read and weep. Free-radicals are bad news. These free-radicals are linked to the origins of cancer, illness, an aging. Scientists are now focusing their efforts on understanding how free-radicals work what effects they have on the body.

For those interested in how free-radicals affect the skin, let it be said that free-radicals are definitely harmful to the skin. Free-radicals initiate the deterioration of the skin's structural support and decrease the elasticity, resilience, and suppleness of skin. They are often tagged as the culprit in the case of wrinkles, loss of skin elasticity and suppleness.

Damage due to free-radicals isn't something that is easily explained, as it happens on an atomic level. When oxygen molecules are involved in chemical reactions, they usually lose one electron of their electrons. In turn these molecules, which are now called free-radicals, will take electrons from nearby molecules. This will set off a chain reaction that is summarily called free-radical damage.

So pretty much anything that contains oxygen – carbon monoxide, hydrogen peroxide – can cause free-radical damage. Often the causes of adverse free-radical damage in the natural world are exhaust fumes, too much sunlight, and other sources that contain oxygen.

Other Causes of Free-radical Damage to the Skin

Radiation

Radiation may cause the build up of free-radicals. X-rays, gamma rays and others may increase the presence of free-radicals in the body.

Cigarette Smoking

Smoking, aside from being a health hazard to the lungs, has been known to cause dry, unhealthy skin, and pale, unhealthy complexion. Also, they have been studied to promote the presence of free-radicals in the body, further complicating the adverse affects tobacco brings.

Inorganic Particles

There are also other substances that cause free-radical damage. Among these substances are asbestos, quartz, silica.

Gases

Although ozone is not a free-radical, it is a very powerful oxidizing agent. Ozone which degrades under certain conditions, contain two unpaired electrons. This suggests that free-radicals can be formed when this decomposition happens.

But wait, don't we all need oxygen to live? Yes, we do. Fortunately, we have antioxidants to help us survive!

Antioxidants

Antioxidants help prevent free-radical damage by preventing these free-radical molecules from interacting with other molecules, therefore stunting the chain reaction of the process. The good news is that these antioxidants exist bountifully in the human body and the plant world. Antioxidants include ingredients such as vitamins A, C and E; flavonoids; superoxide dismutase; beta carotene; selenium; glutathione; and zinc.

Now back to business. How does this affect one's skin? Studies are pointing to the fact that wrinkles and other age related skin factors are directly related to free-radical damage that is not countered by antioxidants. If one does not get enough antioxidants from their diet and other sources, their skin cells could break down and lose their ability to function well.

Most lotions and moisturizers nowadays bandy an antioxidant formula specifically targeted to those who are concerned about the free-radical damage. Unfortunately, it is hard to prove if these compounds can actually show dramatic results since it isn't practical to expect results overnight.

It is however, still a good idea to splurge on antioxidants as the benefits of these compounds are well-known. Some people even believe that with further scientific inquiry, free-radical investigation could lead to startling advances against the effects of aging.

To increase antioxidants in the body one may increase the intake of antioxidants in the diet, or may purchase topical applications of the vitamins A, C, E and the other antioxidant compounds to increase the defense against free-radical damage.

Some scientists think that should free-radical damage be halted or reversed, antioxidants are the answer.

Therefore, to increase the presence of antioxidants in the body, a modified diet presence of antioxidants in the diet, and, possibly, the topical application of antioxidants in skin-care products, plays a part in slowing down free-radical damage.

Conclusion

Now, should we all jump into the anti-free-radical bandwagon?

Although science has yet to put the finishing touches on the studies regarding free-radicals, there is enough evidence to suggest that antioxidants can benefit the body. Although it will not guarantee an overnight skin miracle, it will at least stymie the effects of free-radical damage, and possibly, reverse them.

Vitamin C And Your Skin

To be useful and effective to the skin and body, vitamin C should be in the form of L-ascorbic acid. Studies reveal that once it is applied on the skin, It can stay in the skin for up to seventy two hours.

Vitamin C and Melanogenesis

Research shows that vitamin C helps decrease melanin formation. The fact that melanin is responsible for the skin's dark pigmentation, studies clearly show that vitamin C contributes to skin lightening.

A preparation can be used to clarify and even out the skin tone as it lightens dark spots and skin blemishes.

Vitamin C and sun protection

By neutralizing free radicals, the exceedingly reactive molecules created by the sunlight, cell membranes and other components of skin tissue's interaction. Be it clear though, that it has no capacity to absorb light, so it is not a sunscreen and should never be a substitute or a replacement to sunscreen; it is however good applying it alongside a sunscreen product.

Vitamin C and its role in collagen synthesis

The only antioxidant proven to increase collagen synthesis, it aids in the healing of minor cuts and wounds.

As collagen decreases with age, photo aging further speeds up the decrease. L-ascorbic acid acts as a signal, sending the message to the collagen genes so it can manufacture more collagen, and also is a

cofactor for enzymes vital in collagen synthesis.

Vitamin C and its function as antioxidant and free radical inhibitor

The production of collagen is affected when the skin is exposed to reactive oxygen species, known as free radicals. As a result, wrinkles and premature skin sagging transpire.

Too much UV radiation exposure will give rise to free radicals. As UV radiation deeply penetrates the skin creating free radicals as well as other reactive agents that hit and damage the skin's lipids, vitamin C helps the body to neutralize these free radicals.

Vitamin C performs these functions:

1. Fights off foreign invaders in the body.
2. Increases collagen production in the skin.
3. Helps in the production of anti bodies.
4. Is a natural antihistamine, can reduce allergic reactions.
5. Naturalizes pollutants.
6. Maintains healthy skin
7. Increase the rate of healing.

Guidelines in evaluating vitamin c products:

1. Ask if the product contain L-ascorbic acid. There are certain products containing L-ascorbic acid within a vitamin c complex. Know what form of vitamin c is used.
2. L-ascorbic acid should be at a low ph level, to effectively penetrate the skin.
3. Check if the preparation is stable.
4. The product to look for is that which contains stable L-ascorbic acid, low ph and high concentration.
5. Do remember that when a label says "vitamin c", it does not mean that it contains L-ascorbic acid.

L-ascorbic products for the skin:

Cellex-C

Uses l-ascorbic acid as its primary ingredient, combined with zinc sulphate and L-tyrosine, making the skin firmer, and reduces deep lines, which gives the skin a more youthful appearance.

This formulation is applied to the face once a day and results can be achieved within eight to twelve weeks.

C Factor™

High in L-ascorbic acid, this product promotes cell renewal and protects the skin from future damage.

Benefits include:

1. Perks up sun-damaged skin.
2. Decreases the appearance of wrinkles and fine lines.
3. Improves skin tones.
4. UV Aging is inhibited to achieve younger looking skin.
5. Can be used under daily make up.
6. Pores are unclogged.
7. Has a moisturizing formula
8. Help in the production of collagen.
9. Sustains the elasticity of the skin.

Action C

Delivers L-ascorbic acid in concentrated form, without losing potency to improve the appearance of blemished or sun damaged skin.

Immediately upon the first application, it hydrates the skin resulting to

a vibrant skin. It also shields the skin from the sun's rays to minimize the effect of premature aging.

HydraXtract "C"

Vitamin C (L-ascorbic acid) combined with vitamin E, a-bisobolol, panthenol (Pro-Vitamin B5), tocopheryl acetate (Vitamin E), aloe vera, allantoin, and chamomile extract work to a more youthful and even skin tone.

Regardless of all the benefits vitamin C provides, one should note that it is important not to get stuck on just one antioxidant alone. Skin aging is very complicated, and although vitamin c is evidently very effective, researchers suggest that it is best to combat factors in increasing skin aging using multiple antioxidants and not relying on a few that has greater publicity. Likewise, it will be incorrect to say that there is one single "best" antioxidant.

Is Dermabrasion Right For Your Skin?

Dermal abrasion, or surgical planning of the skin, is done in selected patients with facial disfigurements from scars resulting from acne, trauma, tattoo, nevi, freckles, and chickenpox or smallpox.

The procedure involves the removal of the epidermis and some superficial dermis while reserving enough of the dermis to allow re-epithelialization of the dermabraded areas. Results are best in the face, because it is rich in intra-dermal epithelial elements.

Surgical planning or dermabrasion is performed either manually with coarse abrasive paper, or mechanically with an abrader or a rapidly rotating wire brush.

Patient Instruction and Preparation

The primary reason for undergoing dermabrasion is to improve the appearance.

Before the process will begin, the surgeon explains to the patient what he can expect from dermabrasion. The patient should also be informed about the nature of the postoperative dressing, the discomforts he may experience, and how long it will take before his tissues will look normal again.

Normally, the extent of the surface to be planed will determine whether the procedure takes place in the surgeon's office, the clinic, or the hospital. In most cases, a general anesthetic is used and the patient is hospitalized.

The skin is thoroughly cleansed for several days before the surgery. Shaving is not necessary in the female, but with the males, it is important to shave their face on the morning of the surgery.

In addition to general anesthesia, the use of a topical spray anesthetic for stabilizing and stiffening the skin may be desirable. The depth of planning can be readily gauged and the anesthetized area is momentarily bloodless. The superficial layers of skin are removed by

an abrasive machine, usually known as the Dermabrader, or the sandpapering.

During and after planning, copious saline irrigations remove debris and allow for inspection.

Is It Right For Everybody's Skin?

Even if dermabrasion is one of the best surgeries needed to clear the skin from scars from acne and other skin problems, there are still some factors that need to be considered before jumping into conclusions. These factors are very important to take into considerations because not all skin type is created equal. Hence, the effects may vary.

Here are some of the factors that need to be considered before applying dermabrasion.

1. The skin color

People who have dark skins tend to have permanent discoloration or blotchiness after the surgery. Therefore, it would be better not to opt of dermabrasion if the skin falls under this category.

2. The skin's condition

There are people who are born with sensitive skins. This means that their skins will immediately experience allergic reactions to some chemicals or treatments that the skin cannot endure.

In this manner, people who have sensitive skins should not resort to dermabrasions.

3. People who have acne that are on its active stage are not allowed for dermabrasion.

If the person has acne that is currently on its active stage, it is best not to try dermabrasion. This is because there is the danger of infection due to the freshness of the open skin. Ruptured or open skin will be easily penetrated by bacteria that cause infection.

This is also applicable for people who have burnt skin or those that have previously undergo chemical peel.

4. Be wary of people who perform dermabrasion.

Dermabrasion is actually a safe surgical treatment. However, it requires expertise and familiarity on the process in order to perform it properly.

Hence, dermabrasion should not be executed by people who still lack some of the required skills in the execution of the process.

5. There are skins that have the tendency to develop keloids or excessive benign growth of skin tissues.

This simply means that for people who usually develop a scar or keloid whenever their skin is damaged, chances are, they would develop the

same thing when they undergo dermabrasion.

However, there are some treatments that can remove the scars and keloids, it would still be better to avoid such trouble of getting into another medication. Hence, for people who have skins that fall under this category, it is best not to try dermabrasion.

All of these things are boiled down to the fact that dermabrasion is not appropriate for everybody. Like the other treatments available in the medical field, it should also be analyzed with utmost care before jumping into decisions.

After all, it is the person's skin that will be put at risk and not just their money, so, careful considerations is extremely important.

Are Chemical Peels For You?

Are you considering a having a chemical peel? Or are you considering any sort of facial treatment yet do not know which one is right for you? Then you have come to the right place! Let this informative guide outline on what chemical peels are and how they work. This information will make it easier for you to make decisions regarding which facial treatments would be the best for you.

Chemical peels use solutions that will smoothen and improve skin texture and appearance. It does so by stripping away the damaged outer layers of the skin. By doing so, chemical peels can lessen, and in some cases, even eliminate blemishes, hyperpigmentation (or

discoloration and darkening.) and wrinkles. They are even known to reduce acne scars and the occurrence of acne.

It is very important that, first of all, that you get proper appraisal on your current skin condition. This will help understand better your skin's needs and the proper treatment of such. Some people think that chemical skin peels are the 'cure-all' for their skin problems. This is far from the truth. The proper chemical peel will target your specific problems provide the adequate solution.

There are many kinds of chemical peels, you may choose one according to your needs and circumstance. The available chemical peels are divided into three categories: Phenol, trichloroacetic acid (TCA), and alphahydroxy acids (AHA). Each of these categories differ in use, potency and inconvenience. Your dermatologist will help you decide which one is right for you.

A dermatologist will help you determine which peel program is right for you. He may suggest a customized solution for you. Before actually agreeing to the procedure, make sure you understand what the dermatologist is about to do. If there is some point you need clarified make sure you have the dermatologist clarify it further.

Alphahydroxy acids (AHAs) are the mildest of the chemical peels. They are typically made of fruit, glycolic, and lactic acids. These peels may not show as dramatic effects as the other peels; they are, however, best for those who do not have time to recover from the other peel procedures. These peels are applied weekly or periodically, depending on your dermatologist's advice. But they do result in smoother, finer

looking skin after a few treatments.

There are also commercially available AHA facial care solutions that can be applied everyday. Some dermatologists will incorporate AHA into the daily skin care regimen of the patient. This may be in soaps, facial cleanser, etc.

Trichloroacetic acid (TCA) is the intermediate peel for those who wish to have the effects almost as dramatic as phenol peels yet cannot dedicate too much time to healing as in the case of those who prefer AHA peels. To achieve the desired effect more than one peel may be necessary. This treatment is ideal for medium depth peeling. It is also the ideal peel for fine lines, and blemishes that are not that severe.

Phenol is the most potent of the chemical peels around and they take some time to heal. They are recommended in cases that feature coarse wrinkles and severe blemishes such as blotching, coarse skin, etc. Phenol is also a strong whitening agent and this may be a factor in considering whether to choose this sort of treatment.

It must be remembered that this is primarily a facial treatment. Application to other parts of the body may result in scarring.

Among the things to look out for are: the possibility of demarcation lines – lines that show which part of the face received treatment and which did not, redness, irritation, and other side effects. The redness and irritation is normal since that is the usual state of newly peeled skin. Your dermatologist will advise you on the care and upkeep of tender skin.

For those who have undergone this treatment, it is generally recommended that they stay out of the sun for several months as to protect the newly formed skin. The procedure will cause stinging, redness and irritation. But that is to be expected from such procedures.

All in all, chemical peels are safe, although they may cause some inconvenience. The risks for scarring are low. However, the procedure must be performed by a certified professional if to ensure safety.

Skin Care – Inside Out

We discussed this earlier and you may have heard of skin care treatments such as chemical peels, facelifts, dermabrasion, laser light, and all those wonders of skin science that constantly make looking younger, fairer, more confident a reality for many people.

What if you were told that there was a way to make your skin healthier, younger looking aside from these methods? A method that does not include scalpels, suction, topical solutions and others? Wouldn't it be great? Alas, you might say, it hasn't happened yet, maybe some day in the far-off future. But what if you were told that it was possible even today. Would you flip?

The wonder being talked about here is the wonder that has always been there – your body. Your body has the ability to regulate itself, supply nutrients to various organs such as the skin and generally give

it a healthy glow.

The body also has the capability of improving how the skin looks. It can make the skin more supple, radiant, healthy, and youthful looking. Taking care of the body from the inside out has been grossly underrated. Caring for the skin in this way will result in a more natural glow. This method of skin care in conjunction with other skin treatments will result in the optimal skin care.

If this is the case, then why doesn't it do that exact same thing to everyone, you may ask. Various factors will impair the body's ability to do – bad diet, smoking, stress, lack of sleep and other factors make the skin that old, scaly, thing many people see in front of the mirror.

But wait, there's hope! With proper nutrition, proper care and maintenance, you can help your body improve your skin's health and appearance.

Think of it like this. Let's say you have a green plant, and you don't water it for sometime, and neglect to give it fertilizer, and plant it on poor soil, won't the leaves wither and dry up? The same can be said about one's health in general and the skin in particular.

The exciting thing here is that it is becoming increasingly evident that it is not only what you apply on your skin that improves it, but what you put into your body as well. Studies are showing that vitamins, minerals, water, exercise and rest all play an important part in improving skin.

Experts say that the skin is the benchmark for the body's health. Healthy skin also an indicator of good health, so taking good care of your body not only gives you great skin but give you good health in general.

To improve skin health, it would do well to take note of the following factors.

Vitamins and Minerals

There is a dearth of good nutrition on the market, and it is getting increasingly hard to get the necessary vitamins and minerals from what the average American eats. Vitamin supplements may help in this regard. Scientists are discovering how increasingly important the vitamins C, E, A, K, and B complex are to skin health. Being able to absorb these vitamins through diet and supplements will improve skin health a great deal.

Water

Dehydration results in scaly, coarse, and unhealthy skin. Water also helps flush out toxins in the body. These toxins could cause a variety of skin conditions and could very well spell skin doom for most people.

Exercise

The benefits of exercise have been understated. Exercise can benefit the body and the skin a lot. Since exercise has the effect of improving circulation, this improved circulation benefits the organs of the body. And since the skin is the largest organ, it benefits greatly from exercise. Good circulation helps bring more blood and nutrients to the skin. It also facilitates the removal of waste and toxins, resulting in a

better skin health.

Rest

Stress and lack of rest have a telling effect on the skin. The body needs rest to repair and rejuvenate skin cells. If the body does not get this rest the skin generally appears pallid and contributes to a haggard look. Also the bags that form beneath the eyes due to water retention, give the person a zombified look. Lack of sleep has also been pinned as one cause of acne.

Facelifts and Other Skin Procedures

For those who desire to improve their appearance, facelifts and other skin treatments has always been the way to go to attain an improved image and renewed self-confidence. Traditionally, this has always been accomplished through procedures such as facelifts and chemical peels. There are other procedures that exist due to the diligence of scientists who have poured time and effort to improve knowledge on the skin and its treatment.

Today's modern technology makes possible many new breakthroughs in skin care and skin treatment. Skin care nowadays is no longer limited to facials and surgical procedures.

Here are some of the latest and not-so-latest advances in the science of skin.

Obagi Nu-Derm

Obagi is a new system that rejuvenates skin health from the cells. It

helps maintain a healthy glow and the appearance of soft, smooth, radiant, and younger looking skin. The treatment is easy and can be done at home. It transforms dry, damaged, and course skin into fresher looking skin in as little as six weeks – which is about the same time it takes for new skin to emerge.

The genius of Obagi is that it deals more with skin health rather than skin beautification – more like making the road stronger and smoother rather than just plastering the cracks with filler.

This treatment is usually performed in conjunction with the Obagi Blue Peel treatment.

The Obagi Blue Peel is a mild chemical peel that allows for the removal of damaged layers of the skin. After a week or so, this area will be replaced by a new layer of skin which will be smoother and will have smaller pores.

Theraderm®

This treatment uses a lactic acid peel to improve the skin's appearance. It is used to treat discoloration, and damage due to the sun's harmful rays. Theraderm is appealing due to the fact that it is recommended for skin of all types and age. In as little as six weeks, this treatment can result in smooth skin with a more uniform tone.

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BOTOX®

Botox is the cosmetic treatment of choice for most of today's beauty conscious individuals. Due to its incessant popularity, plastic surgery and other 'bloody' treatments available are steadily being out hustled by botox.

Restylane

Restylane smoothes wrinkles, and helps shape and sculpt lips and facial features. The treatment involves the use of a clear gel of hyaluronic acid. This substance is hypoallergenic and remains in the skin for months.

Collagen

Collagen injections plump up skin tissue, causing it to look healthier and firmer. This is usually performed in cases where there is sagging and loss of firmness in the skin. Results will last for a few months. This treatment is usually recommended for the lips and other areas of the face that are desired to look fuller, smoother, and firmer.

Light Procedures

The CO2 Laser targets fine lines, scars and wrinkles and makes dramatic correction on these areas that are not possible with chemical peels. With powerful bursts of laser light, the treatment achieves this result with less reddening and irritation than other peels.

Technology is constantly creating methods to produce skin care treatments that are constantly getting safer, more effective and more dramatic. The above-mentioned treatments are the best today's technology offers and give many people the opportunity to improve their image the safe and effective way today.

Resources

American Academy of Dermatology

1350 I St. NW, Suite 870
Washington, DC 20005-4355
(202) 842-3555
(202) 842-4355 Fax

<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/linkwarning/linkwarning.cfm?link=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Eaad%2Eorg%2F>

American Society for Dermatologic Surgery

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