



The Cosmetic

Because cosmetic dermatology is a rapidly changing field with many new procedures and treatments being introduced constantly, there is a lot you can learn from your cosmetic consultation. If you are unsure what may help, ask your doctor or skin care therapist what may make you look younger. Often, it may be something simple that you had not previously thought about.

■ Have you been looking at areas on your face or body and deciding that certain areas don't look as youthful as they once did? Do you see spots that were not there before? Has your skin lost its "glow"? If you think that the glamorous world of cosmetic procedures has passed you by – think again!

In fact, men and women are looking better today than ever, and later in life too! Why shouldn't you be too? A cosmetic consultation with your cosmetic dermatologist or dermasurgeon may have just the answers you have been looking for. So, when you go for your consultation, don't hold back!

The cosmetic consultation is your time to express your inner wishes about your appearance as well as any concerns or frustrations you may have about wrinkles here and there, brown spots, uneven skin texture and loose or sagging skin. There are many things that can be done, and your dermatologist can help if he or she knows what is bothering you.

For example, as we get older, the face tends to lose the youthful volume it once had. This can be remedied in several ways. Using a volume enhancing injectable filler called Sculptra and with a few treatments, that wonderful shape can be returned with results that last two years or more. You will also be happy to know that there is a painless, no-downtime way to tighten the neckline and lower face using surgical free fractional skin tightening. Tightening the whole face for reduced fine lines and wrinkles can be done with a laser that works skin of any color.

Under the eyes, the skin tends to sink in with time and may appear dark in color. Luckily, this is an area that can be easily remedied with several different injectable fillers, most notably Perlane, Radiesse and Restylane. Proper placement of these fillers can blend the upper cheek to the lower eyelid instantly taking years off your appearance. In fact, these fillers may be used in many areas of the face and body, some you

Consultation

Express your wish!

By: Todd E. Schlesinger, MD, FAAD & Rebecca Repaire, PA-C

may not have thought of such as the eyebrows and the back of the hands. The most commonly treated areas continue to be the lips, folds between the nose and mouth, the lower cheek/chin area and the corners of the mouth. Perlane has sometimes been referred to as a “building block” for facial rejuvenation. Through its ability to cause the production of new collagen, it seems to render better results each time it is used.

The hands deserve special mention as they are often called “the window to your age”. As we get older, they lose a lot of the underlying fat that keeps them looking youthful. Veins appear and brown spots become plentiful, sometimes making up most of the skin surface! On the upside, lasers can easily zap most of these spots away and injections of fillers can restore the young look your hands once had. These treatments work just as well for men as they do for women.

Wrinkle reduction is all the rage nowadays and fortunately, we have fractional resurfacing to address them. With erbium laser fractional resurfacing, minimal downtime procedures can result in smoother, youthful looking skin in as few as three to five treatments. The key to the success of this treatment is that only part of the skin surface is treated in any given session, allowing the normal areas in between to heal the skin quickly. The healing process is what

turns on your skin’s collagen factory causing it to add new layers.

One of the most common procedures performed in the office is a photofacial with or without first sensitizing the skin to the light with a topical medicine called Levulan. Photofacials are designed to help the skin in many ways. First, the treatments remove unsightly brown spots. They also remove facial blood vessels that have become visible with time. The laser or intense pulsed light device can also impart a smoother appearance to the skin that comes from new collagen that is created during and after treatments. Finally, if your face shows persistent redness that gets worse with heat, spicy foods or emotion, photofacial treatments can clear that up for you.

Let’s not forget the body. Annoying things such as stretch marks, loose skin, scaly and thick feet, sagging thighs and arms, visible blood vessels or veins on the legs, red spots on the body and bumps on the face all have treatments available that can turn back the years or improve your appearance. Have a tattoo you don’t want anymore? Laser tattoo removal can take it off without scarring.

Vibradermabrasion is a non-invasive medical microdermabrasion procedure that uses a patented surgical steel patterned paddle that is gently moved

continued on page 8



continued from page 7

across the skin. Unlike other systems, the vibration causes the formation of new collagen. This has been proven in clinical trials and the results are obvious in facial photographs. This ingenious device can be used to “infuse” professional skin care products into the skin. For example, infusion of a self tanner called San Soleil can produce a more even and longer lasting artificial tan. Infusion of SkinMedica’s Ceratopic cream can do wonders for thick, scaly or dry feet. Vibradermabrasion can be used all over the body and works great for elbows, that annoying “chicken skin” on the back of the arms or front of the thighs as well as for the hands or feet.

Remember, the goal of the consultation is primarily to educate the patient about the procedures available to address their concerns, the process of preparing for the procedures and the recovery period involved (if any). It is your opportunity to ask questions, review photographs of actual patients treated in the office

and decide together which treatments or procedures would best address your needs. Look for an office in which there is a physician who is board certified in the cosmetic specialty that you are seeking treatment in. The physician should be available to address any medical concerns that may arise and to focus the treatment plan to your specific needs. A picture is worth a thousand words. State-of-the-art digital imaging is a must, preferably with skin surface and sub-surface analysis that can accurately track your progress.

Ultraviolet imaging also known as Woods Lamp illumination can reveal hidden sun damage that you probably did not know you had. Using this special light or camera, your face appears much different as the light allows your skin care team to see below the skin surface to the damage below. Luckily, this type of imaging can also be used to show your improvement in a clear and easily recognizable way.

Worth emphasizing, a professional skin care home care regimen should be a part of everyone’s routine. Some incredible new products have been released lately that have proven themselves both scientifically and clinically. For example, SkinCeuticals new Phloretin CF has the bark extract Phloretin along with Vitamin C and the powerful antioxidant ferulic acid. This combination can’t be beat and studies have already proven it to normalize the DNA damage in the skin that is caused by sun exposure. RevitaLash eyelash conditioner has proven itself in our practice to produce longer, thicker and fuller eyelashes within weeks. Growth factors such as the products in the NeoCutis line have also been popular as they grow new collagen and complement antioxidant therapy.

So, don’t be shy about asking for help and don’t feel resigned to live with anything that disturbs you about your appearance. So much can be done today before resorting to costly and invasive procedures. ■



Todd E. Schlesinger, MD, FAAD

Dermatology & Laser Center of Charleston
Charleston, South Carolina
(843) 556-8886