

Turn Back The Clock

Address Aging Skin Appropriately

Christine Spehar

Someone once said, "Time may be a great healer, but it's a lousy beautician." The signs of aging are obvious-- wrinkles, fine lines, sagging skin, age spots, enlarged pores, hormonal imbalances. Yet, we live in an age where skin care is at its most advanced, allowing us to prevent and treat the signs of aging like never before.

The Problems

First, let's take a look at how the aging process affects our skin, and then hear from the experts about how to combat those effects.

FINE LINES AND WRINKLES

There are two types of wrinkles that show

Sun exposure, overly abrasive products, smoking, poor nutrition, and other unhealthy lifestyle choices can also damage skin. Add to that the skin's own aging process: "The cell renewal process slows down. Fibroblast cells, which are the things that generate collagen and elastin, decrease their production," says Robin Carter, licensed esthetician and manager of esthetics at Dr. Hauschka Skin Care, Inc., located in Deerfield, New Hampshire. "Also, the skin naturally loses moisture as we age, so it has a tendency to wrinkle more easily the older we get."

SKIN DISCOLORATION/AGE SPOTS

"Sun damage is the biggest cause of skin



Your skin care professional will help you select the products and treatments best for your skin.

up as we age--dynamic wrinkles and wrinkles caused by sun damage or lifestyle choices. "Dynamic wrinkles are often hereditary and are influenced by muscle contraction and relaxation," says Alison O'Neil Andrew, a licensed esthetician and founder of Atlanta-based Beauty Becomes You Foundation, a nonprofit organization for seniors.

discoloration or texture changes and can show up as early as the teenage years," O'Neil Andrew says. "The intensity of the damage caused will appear even more, starting in the late thirties. Symptoms include changes in pigmentation, brown discolored spots on the skin, and splotchiness of the skin

Continued on page 2

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In this Issue

Turn Back The Clock

Benefits of Peptides

Shea Butter

Continued from page 1

following a burn."

Sun exposure can lead to things worse than blotchy skin, however. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States." Be sure to visit your doctor if you see a spot on your skin that has irregular size, shape, or coloring, or if there are significant changes to already existing spots.

SAGGING SKIN

As we age, skin becomes less firm and under the weight of gravity, can start to lack definition. "Our skin begins to lose its elasticity as we get older and as collagen production slows," Carter says. "Subcutaneous tissue is responsible for giving our skin a fresh, plump look, and we start to lose some of that padding, particularly on our face, as time goes on. This can cause sagging skin."

HORMONAL CHANGES

While dry skin is a common complaint of maturation, hormonal fluctuations may cause the opposite problem. "Women who are going through menopause experience hormonal shifts that cause the skin's oil to get thicker," Carter says. "This can cause clogged pores that can lead to papules and pimples."

ENLARGED PORES

Though pore size is genetically predetermined, pores can look as if they increase in size over time as skin loses elasticity and pores stretch. Skin may also lose its ability to clear away dead skin cells efficiently, leading to clogged pores. "In this case, it's not that the pore is actually bigger, it is just more visible because it is not as smooth as it should be," says Celia Lang, Palisades, New York-based spa manager and licensed esthetician for Weleda North America, a natural skin care company.

The Solutions

Though time will continue marching on, there are ways to help ourselves age gracefully.

DEEP CLEANSE

Clearing blocked pores is important for maintaining radiant skin and ensuring the skin is ready for optimal moisture absorption. However, it is crucial to be

more gentle with mature skin than with younger skin. Strong cleansers, abrasive scrubs, and extractions should be avoided. A professional skin care practitioner will guide you through the best treatments and products for achieving the deep cleanse appropriate for your skin.

HYDRATE, HYDRATE, HYDRATE

"Hydration masks are a key to long-term results when addressing aging skin complaints," Lang says. "If you are not properly hydrated, then you can't expect skin cells to normalize or respond to a problem." Following a moisturizing cleanse, your skin care professional may apply a hydrating mask on the skin for several minutes to allow the healing properties to fully penetrate the epidermis. It's especially important to use a moisturizing day cream that contains sun block to prevent further sun damage and dryness.

MASSAGE/TISSUE STIMULATION

"The massage, often thought as a luxury during masking, is actually an important step," Lang says. "Through massage, the esthetician is warming the blood circulation and gently stimulating the

lymph to encourage the body's natural ability to normalize the cycle of skin cell rejuvenation."

COLLAGEN ENHANCERS

Your esthetician can provide serums and treatments to enhance collagen and elastin for younger looking skin. Some collagen-enhancing formulas, like Retin-A or Strivectin, can also be helpful for wrinkles. Products containing known antiaging ingredients, like Ester-C, green tea extract, or alpha hydroxy acid, are solid additions to a moisturizing regimen.

Aging is inevitable. But partnering with an esthetician and staying educated, you are better equipped to make the processes as painless as possible.



Quality sunscreen is a critical part of any anti-aging regimen, no matter your age.

Benefits of Peptides

Janet McCormick

Peptides are strings of amino acids, held together by nitrogen and carbon bonds. Under the microscope, they have a similar appearance to a string of pearls. Peptides have been around since the birth of tissue, and scientists recognize them as the building blocks of life. In the skin, peptides occur naturally to keep the skin firm. In skin care products, lab-created peptides work from the inside out to address a host of facial issues, especially wrinkles.

The pivotal benefit of peptides in skin care is their ability to penetrate the skin. This is a result of their size at a molecular level. Peptides consist of up to 100 amino acids strung together, so they are actually mini-proteins: chains of 100-200 amino acids are called polypeptides, and chains of more than 200 are simply called proteins.

Long-chain proteins, such as collagen, can only be applied to the surface of the skin, because their molecular size makes it impossible for them to go deeper. The

best they can do is to act as a temporary moisture barrier to promote hydration and softness. But when these long-chain proteins are broken into shorter chains (peptides), skin penetration becomes possible.

Peptides are non-invasive ingredients that have been proven to produce results, so they are great options for incorporating into a skin care regimen. Know, however, that peptides are not quick and magic potions. Their one drawback is that they take time because they build from within the skin, not from peeling the outer surface. The positives of this approach: stronger skin, less or no irritation, and no free-radical stimulation.

Janet McCormick is a spa consultant with considerable experience in skin care, nails, and spa management. She holds a master's degree in allied health management, as well as a Comite International D'Esthetique et de Cosmetologie (CIDESCO) diploma.



Ask a skin care professional about products for you.

Shea Butter

For Your Complexion and More

Shelley Burns, N.D.

Shea butter comes from the nut of the shea tree (pronounced shay) found in the tropics of Africa, primarily West Africa. It offers many benefits as a topical moisturizer for skin and hair, and improves other skin problems and appearance.

As well as providing relief from minor dermatological conditions like eczema, lesser burns, and acne, shea butter can be used as a natural sunscreen and for stretch-mark prevention during pregnancy. Other benefits include the evening out of skin tone, reducing blemishes, and restoring skin elasticity.

Shea butter easily penetrates the skin, allowing skin to breathe without clogging pores. It contains high

concentrations of linoleic acid, which provide skin protection at a cellular level, as well as vitamins A, E, and F, which protect against premature wrinkles. Vitamin F in shea butter also soothes rough, dry, or chapped skin.

Healing though it may be, shea butter undergoes a rigorous path in its journey from overseas to the faces and bodies of your clients. The fruit from the shea tree is cultivated, cracked, grilled, pounded, and boiled. The shea butter is then scooped out of the nut and left to cool.

Properties of shea butter include unsaponifiables--substances that cannot decompose into acids, salts, or alcohol. For that reason, shea butter is extremely

absorbable, even more so than soybean and avocado oils.

There are three types of shea butter extraction and just two of the three end products of these extractions should be used. Unrefined shea butter in its pure form is yellow. Refined shea butter is processed but still contains many of its natural components. Either is fine to use. Highly refined shea butter may well have lost its healing properties and can include such solvents as hexane, which may cause nerve damage. It is pure white and should be avoided. Another note of caution: shea butter is not recommended for people with nut and latex allergies, and some experts also discourage its use by people with chocolate allergies.

Welcome to the Radiant Skin Therapy Newsletter! I have included articles that are beneficial to promoting your healthiest skin. Remember to share the information included with those you care about as well. I look forward to working with you to achieve your desired skin health, and give you that radiance we all want that reflects health! Please do share this page on your Facebook and Twitter accounts for your friends and family to benefit from the free information inside.

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