



NOTED AND QUOTED

Dermatologists in the News

A June 2011 article from *Elle* magazine online, "The Latest and Greatest SPF Products," reviewed the benefits of new sunscreen technology in over-the-counter skin care products. Despite recent advances in sunscreen technology, however, **Dr. Jennifer Linder** warned that not even the highest possible SPF is capable of blocking all UV radiation. To get the most out of sunscreen, **Dr. Jessica Wu** suggested that patients look for products with added antioxidants, which protect skin cells from DNA damage and prevent the breakdown of collagen. **Dr. Jody Levine** also advised that patients should wear sun-protective clothing.

In a *Men's Health* interview reported online, **Dr. Dennis Gross** answered questions from readers regarding skin care practices for men. To reduce and prevent the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles, **Dr. Gross** noted that topical application of vitamins is at least 20 times more potent than ingesting a pill. Antioxidants such as vitamins A, C, and E; coenzyme Q10; lycopene; grape seed extract; and collagen boosters such as peptides and genistein help prevent fine lines, promote collagen growth, and protect the skin. Men should look for skin care products that contain a combination of these ingredients, **Dr. Gross** said. He also recommended moisturizers that contain hyaluronic acid, which draws water from the atmosphere into the skin to make it look plumper and firmer. Men also should incorporate exfoliating acids into their daily skin care regimens to boost collagen production and reverse the trend of collagen breakdown, therefore creating a youthful and more vibrant complexion.

Dr. Gross recommended gentle microexfoliation on a daily basis to revive skin; exfoliating masks or scrubs can irritate the skin. Another daily practice that can irritate the skin is shaving incorrectly, which **Dr. Gross** labeled as men's biggest grooming mistake. Most men shave up, he said, which can lead to ingrown hairs and razor bumps that block oil glands and can even lead to breakouts. Instead, men should shave in multiple directions, always with the grain. **Dr. Gross** advised that minimal pressure

should be applied when shaving, and a shaving cream or lather should be massaged into the skin for 10 to 15 seconds before applying a razor.

Dr. Gross also offered several rules of thumb for men regarding daily habits that contribute to skin health. For instance, heart-healthy foods also can benefit a man's skin, and a diet rich in multicolored fruits and vegetables offers antioxidants that protect against free radicals. Ultimately, a balanced diet that includes all the food groups in moderation is best, he said, to ensure that men are getting all the essential nutrients their skin needs. **Dr. Gross** also suggested drinking plenty of water, getting adequate rest, and cutting down on alcohol and caffeine consumption to promote healthy-looking skin.

For men who struggle with acne, **Dr. Gross** said consistent treatment is key. He recommended looking for products that contain bisabol, an active ingredient derived from chamomile extract that helps soothe redness and reduce inflammation; salicylic acid and sulfur also help control the oil that feeds acne-causing bacteria. However, he warned that overcleaning the skin will not reduce breakouts; instead, it might dry out the skin, causing more breakouts. He advised that patients should avoid products that are overdrying.

In a *Real Simple* article online, "What's Aging Your Skin," **Drs. Doris Day, Leslie Baumann, Ellen Marmur, Fredric Brandt, Arielle Kauvar, and Mary P. Lupo** discuss a range of extrinsic factors that contribute to skin aging. According to **Dr. Day**, only about 20% to 30% of skin aging is genetically determined, so patients have more control over the process than they may think. **Dr. Baumann** noted that sugar consumption can lead to the degradation of collagen and elastin, which ultimately causes sagging and wrinkles. To curb sugar cravings, **Dr. Baumann** suggested a small portion of dark chocolate as an antioxidant-containing treat. **Dr. Marmur** also recommended a diet high in vitamin C to help generate collagen production. Frequent flying also can be damaging to the

skin, **Dr. Marmur** said, as exposure to UV radiation is more intense at higher altitudes; the air also is notoriously dry.

Stress also contributes to skin aging. According to **Dr. Brandt**, repeated muscle contractions from frequent frowning or facial tension can create permanent lines. The signs of depression also can manifest in the skin, **Dr. Brandt** said, as elevated cortisol levels weaken supportive collagen fibers and decreased growth hormone synthesis inhibits the skin's ability to repair itself overnight. Interestingly, botulinum toxin type A injections may help improve symptoms of depression. **Dr. Brandt** also noted that weight gain of as little as 10 to 15 pounds can cause the body's insulin and cortisol levels to rise, leading to collagen breakdown; therefore, maintaining a healthy weight is essential to long-term skin health. Despite seeming counterintuitive, **Dr. Brandt** revealed that marathon workouts, such as running or biking long distances, can actually damage the support structure of the skin through frequent jolting from high-impact activities. Typically, this kind of skin aging usually is a problem for extreme athletes only, but runners should use sunscreen and a great moisturizer to counteract the relentless pull of gravity.

Changing hormones also can impact the skin's appearance. As a woman's estrogen levels drop during menopause, her skin may become drier, more wrinkled, and saggy, **Dr. Kauvar** said. Before turning to hormone replacement therapy, **Dr. Marmur** advised that women should moisturize heavily as their first means of troubleshooting. Dermal fillers also can be used to fill wrinkles and plump up sagging areas. **Dr. Lupo** also explained that, since the skin repairs itself overnight, sleep deprivation keeps the skin from undoing daily damage and causes the body to release more stress hormones. Getting plenty of rest can make the skin look renewed and refreshed. In addition, **Dr. Lupo** advised patients to sleep on their backs, as sleeping on one's face makes the skin crease faster.

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