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Dermatology Update

by Dr. Debra Price

Questions & Answers

Improving wrinkles

Are there any new topical agents to improve wrinkles?

Topical dimethylaminoethanol (DMAE) may improve firmness and sagging of facial skin. It is an antioxidant and an anti-inflammatory agent. The ingredient is contained in Protient Actif Pur by Roc.

Acne and menstruation

I am 35 years old and I continue to breakout, especially before my menstruation. Is it common for women to breakout at different times in their cycle and if so what can be done to control the breakout?

Acne is often associated with hormones and a woman's monthly cycle. Women older than 33 are more likely to experience premenstrual acne than women under age 20. Premenstrual acne breakouts are the worst two days before menstruation. Many physicians will prescribe an antibiotic one week prior to menses to lessen premenstrual flares.

The UV Index

What is the UV Index?

The UV Index is the forecast of the intensity level of skin damaging UV radiation reaching the surface of the Earth. It is derived from a computer model that takes into account the effects of cloud and ozone cover, elevation, latitude, and time of year. It forecasts UV levels on a scale of 0 to 10+. While

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precautions to avoid UV exposure should always be taken, one should be particularly cautious when the UV index is five or greater. At the U.S. E.P.A. Ozone Depletion home page (www.epa.gov/ozone) one can get the UV Index forecast for the next day.

Treating acne

Are there any new treatments for acne?

Clearlight is a high intensity blue light laser system that is pending FDA approval in the United States for treatment of acne. Presently it is being used successfully in Europe. The Clearlight destroys the propionibacterium acnes bacteria. It is particularly effective in inflammatory and cystic acne, especially in those patients who do not want to take oral medications or who cannot tolerate them due to side effects. In studies outside the United States, a 65 percent decrease in acne lesions was observed after eight biweekly sessions. A significant decrease in inflammation was also seen. If approved in the United

States it will be a welcome addition to our anti-acne armamentarium.

Other uses for Vaniqa™

Can Vaniqa™ be used in the bikini area after waxing to keep hair from growing back? How about the underarms or legs?

Vaniqa™ is approved for treatment of excessive facial hair. However, it can slow the regrowth of hair in any area. Individuals who use it to decrease hair regrowth should understand that the results persist while using the treatment, but are not permanent. Individuals who discontinue usage will experience a return to their normal hair regrowth pattern. Additionally, using the medication on larger areas can be expensive.

Stopping hair loss

I heard that Nizoral shampoo is suppose to stop hair from falling out...is that true?

Nizoral shampoo is a treatment for dandruff or seborrhea, a scaling condition of the scalp. There has been one study that suggested a potential for increasing hair growth based on a shift of the proportion of hairs in the growing (anagen) phase of the hair cycle. Based on microscopic evidence of inflammation in areas where scalp hairs have decreased in diameter in individuals with androgenetic alopecia, some have hypothesized

continues

that the hair loss in androgenetic alopecia is the result of a microbially driven inflammatory process. This remains to be proven. A more recent study has demonstrated an improvement in hair growth with the daily use of a shampoo containing one percent zinc pyrithione. They further suggested that the daily use of a 1 percent PTZ shampoo may have a prophylactic benefit in slowing the progression of male pattern hair loss but this remains to be proven.

Treating cellulite

Is there anything that can be done about cellulite?

Cellulite is a condition caused by excess fat sequestered between fibrous septa and is particularly prevalent in the buttock and thigh region of women. There is a genetic predisposition to this condition which is felt to result in part from an obstruction to lymphatic and vascular drainage. Topical compounds that increase collagen production can improve the appearance of cellulite. Topical retinol, Retin-A®, Differin® and Tazarac® have been shown to stimulate vascular flow and increase dermal collagen thickness. Endermologie, is a technique, originating in France, that uses a skin fold rolling and suction massage technique to increase subdermal lymphatic and vascular flow. Although the tech-

nique is not FDA approved for cellulite reduction, clinical studies have shown an improvement in the appearance of cellulite. Individuals who continue with maintenance sessions and those with earlier cellulite improve the most. Of course, exercising regularly and maintaining an optimal weight are also helpful.

Wrinkle treatment with lasers

I have recently been hearing a lot about noninvasive laser treatments that improve wrinkles. Are these treatments effective?

Nonablative lasers can stimulate collagen production and improve skin texture and wrinkles, stretch marks and acne scarring. These lasers are effective in treatment of facial and nonfacial areas including the neck, knees, elbows and abdomen. The Cool Touch laser was the first nonablative laser used for this purpose. Patients generally require three to five treatments for optimal results. Other lasers used for nonablative wrinkle and scar treatment include the neodymium yag laser, N lite laser, mid infrared 1450 diode laser and the IPL light source. The noninvasiveness of these treatments is attractive to many patients. However individuals with significant surface skin abnormalities and hyperpigmentation will generally require ablative laser therapy or peels as well.

Care for skin with rosacea

I suffer from rosacea. What recommendations can you make regarding my skin care?

You should use lukewarm rather than cold or hot water to cleanse. Avoidance of alpha hydroxy acid products in favor of salicylic acid or polyhydroxy acid products for exfoliation will decrease the potential for irritation. Those individuals who cannot tolerate these less irritating acid products may be able to mechanically exfoliate with cleansing cloths such as Olay facial cloths. Sun protection is important as well. You should choose a micronized titanium dioxide or microfine zinc oxide based sunblock and avoid chemical based sunscreens. For treatment of photoaging, you should choose a retinol product if you cannot tolerate Retin-A®. ■

Debra Price, M.D., graduated from New York University School of Medicine and interned at New York University Medical Center. She is a diplomate of the American Board of Dermatology and is an assistant professor at University of Miami's department of dermatology and cutaneous surgery. An author of several scientific papers, Dr. Price is an award-winning dermatologist and past president of the Miami Dermatologic Society, in Florida. She has a private practice in Kendall, FL. To reach Debra Price, M.D., please call (305) 670-1111.

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