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dermatology update

by Dr. Debra Price

Questions and Answers

Sensitive skin

I have sensitive skin and am irritated by most skin care products. Do you have any recommendations regarding a skin care line that is suitable for sensitive skin?

Individuals with sensitive skin should cleanse with nonlipid cleansing lotions such as Cetaphil or Aquanil. The Eau Thermale Avene skin care line is designed for sensitive skin. The skin care products are fragrance-free and preservative-free and are packaged in sterile minidose packages. The skin care line contains thermal spring water, a preservative-free cleansing lotion, facial day cream and an emollient cream for severely dry skin.

Smoker's lines

I thought smoker's lines around the mouth were only caused by smoking. I don't smoke but I have them. What do I do to treat and prevent them?

Wrinkles in the perioral area are commonly caused or exacerbated by smoking, but can also develop from sun exposure. They can be prevented or lessened by meticulous sun protection and avoidance of exposure to smoke and other pollutants. Once they have developed, they can be improved by peeling, ablative and nonablative laser resurfacing and injection of filler substances. The new human collagen fillers, Cosmoderm and Cosmoplast can improve perioral

wrinkling and enhance lip fullness. Hyaluronic acid-based filler substances are awaiting FDA approval and hopefully will be another therapeutic option in the near future.

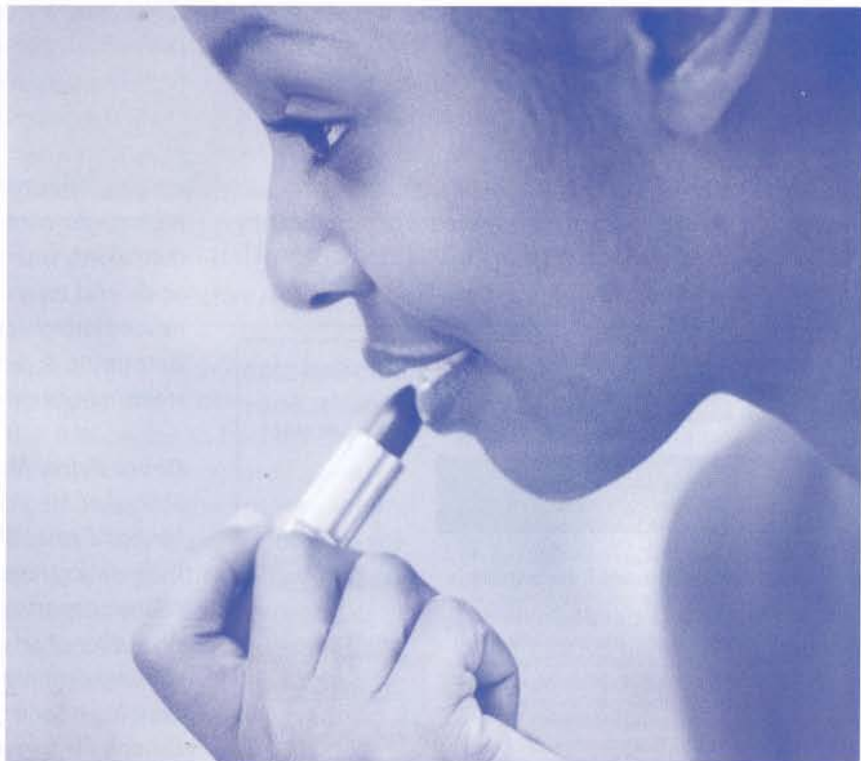
Lasers and acne

I have heard that there are now many lasers and other devices that can be used to treat acne. Which ones are effective, if any and do you recommend them?

Laser and light devices are exciting new treatment options for acne and acne scars. In August, 2002, the Clearlight was the first device approved to treat acne by targeting the Propionibacterium acnes bacteria using a high intensity narrow band blue light. In eight biweekly sessions 80 percent of patients experienced a 60 percent improvement in inflammatory

continues

The lower lip receives the highest ultraviolet exposure of all facial skin. It is therefore prudent for all of us to protect our lips with a high SPF lipstick and to reapply it during extended exposure.



acne lesions. In October, 2002 the Smoothbeam laser was the first laser approved for treatment of acne. Acne was significantly improved after one session and patients had a 98 percent reduction in lesions after four sessions, with a six month remission of acne lesions after treatment. Subsequently, the Cool Touch and N Lite lasers were found beneficial and approved for treatment of acne. The Smoothbeam and Cooltouch lasers are also effective in and have gained FDA approval for ameliorating acne scars. The most recent device approved for treating inflammatory acne is OmniLux Blue. This latter treatment emits narrow band blue light. Although effective, the results are less impressive than those achieved with a nonablative laser (Smoothbeam, Cooltouch, N Lite). Finally, a radiofrequency device in combination with blue light therapy is presently seeking FDA approval (Aurora).

Comedone extractors

How do you feel about the use of comedone extractors? Are they good or bad and do they really work?

Comedone extractors are excellent tools to aid in the removal of comedonal and papulopustular acne lesions. Individuals who develop expertise in their use can perform extractions automatically and effectively. However, it is important to use a high-quality extractor. I recommend the Miltex brand.

Treatment of psoriasis

If you have psoriasis, is laser treatment an option?

Eximer laser treatment of psoriasis was FDA approved last year. It is a highly effective treatment for psoriasis that involves less than 20 percent of a body surface area. Patients' skin generally clears or significantly

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improves within 10 treatments. Because the laser targets specific lesions, sparing normal skin, the risks of ultraviolet light exposure are minimized.

SPF for the lips

What is your opinion about applying lipstick with sunscreen?

The lower lip receives the highest ultraviolet exposure of

all facial skin. Premalignant and malignant lip lesions are more common in individuals with outdoor occupations. It is therefore prudent for all of us to protect our lips with a high SPF lipstick and to reapply it during extended exposure.

Dermatology achievements

What was the biggest advance in dermatology in 2003?

There were many exciting advances in cosmetic dermatology in 2003 and some exciting advances on the horizon. Certainly the expansion of the use of Botox to widen eyes, shape eyebrows and lesson perioral wrinkles in addition to relaxing frown lines, is a major advance in noninvasive dermatology therapy. Hyaluronic acid based injectable fillers for soft tissue augmentation are presently awaiting FDA approval. These agents have been used successfully and widely in Europe and Canada to enhance lips, correct facial wrinkles and restore facial volume loss associated with aging. Neither agent requires skin testing prior to use.

Diet and acne theory

I have been hearing different information about the effects of diet on acne. What is your opinion?

In the past it was an accepted belief that diet had no effect on acne. Recently this opinion has been challenged. Theoretically, it has been suggested that the high sugar content of the typical Western refined food diet, along with the much lower intake of omega-3 fatty acids and excess of trans fatty acids may play a role in exacerbating acne. Clearly, more research is needed to determine if dietary interventions are effective in the treatment or development of acne. ■

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