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Questions and Answers

Pregnancy and skin aging

Q: I am 38 years old and just gave birth to my fourth child several months ago. My skin is really looking old. Most of my friends who have had fewer pregnancies or no children seem to have better skin. Is there any correlation between pregnancy and aging of the skin?

A: Actually, there is an association—the risk of facial wrinkling increases with the number of full-term pregnancies. This results from an increase in enzymes that breakdown collagen during pregnancy. These metalloprotease enzymes are released during pregnancy to allow the fetus to pass through the birth canal.

The sonic skin care brush may be beneficial for those with ingrown hairs and pseudofolliculitis.

The truth about sunscreen

Q: I have heard conflicting reports on the benefits of sunscreen. I am particularly concerned about the risk of it interfering with vitamin D production and causing skin cancer. What is your opinion?

A: The benefits of sunscreen usage are unequivocal and any suggestion that they increase the risk of skin cancer or place individuals at risk of developing vitamin D deficiency are fallacious.

Studies of high-risk populations in areas such as Australia have

shown that daily sunscreen usage lowers the incidence of skin cancer and melanoma. The suggestion that sunscreen adversely affects bone health is also unfounded. It is easy to boost vitamin D levels through diet and oral supplements without exposing oneself to the added risk of skin aging and skin cancer. Moreover, even the most ritual-

istic sunscreen users receive some sun exposure. This sun exposure results from sunscreen's inability to offer full protection from UVA rays; incomplete application; noncompliance with timely reapplication; and sweating, which removes sunscreen. The preponderance of evidence argues in favor of daily sunscreen usage combined with other sun protection measures.

Sonic clean

Q: Are you familiar with an electronic brush that is designed to cleanse the skin?

A: Yes, the Clarisonic Skin Care Brush is an oscillating brush that deep cleans the pores and skin surface. Studies comparing the efficacy of various cleansing methods in removing facial foundation found that the sonic skin care brush was more effective than manual or abrasive cleansing. The improved efficiency in cleansing is because of the brush's



closely spaced, tufted, flexible bristles, which reach the uneven surfaces of facial skin. Individuals with acne, ingrown hairs, pseudofolliculitis, seborrhea or those who wear face makeup should consider this novel cleansing method.

Save face

Q: How do you protect the skin from the sun?

A: The best method to protect the skin from sun exposure is the regular use of a broad-spectrum sunscreen, a broad-brimmed hat and avoidance of midday sun exposure. ■

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