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Because You Asked...

Facial Skin Preservation and Rejuvenation

by Goesel Anson, M.D.

I AM OFTEN ASKED BY YOUNGER AND OLDER PEOPLE WHAT THEY CAN DO TO MAINTAIN THEIR SKIN. ALONG WITH THE TYPICAL FEATURES OF AGING THAT MUST BE DEALT WITH, WE IN THE SOUTHWEST LIVE IN A CLIMATE THAT CAN BE PARTICULARLY HARSH FOR THE SKIN WITH ITS EXTREMES IN HEAT AND COLD, AS WELL AS WINDY AND DRY CONDITIONS. THERE ARE EVERYDAY PRECAUTIONS AS WELL AS MAINTENANCE AND/OR REJUVENATING PROCEDURES THAT CAN BE PERFORMED.

First, avoid sun exposure and stop smoking. The damaging effects of the sun are intense, causing wrinkles, blotchy pigmentation, brown spots, broken blood vessels, loss of elasticity, skin cell DNA damage and skin cancers. Wear a sunscreen every day, remembering that the SPF rating is less important than the type of block provided, with zinc oxide the best and available in a transparent form.

Professional skin care is also important in one's general skin maintenance. Carrie White, a licensed aesthetician in my office, recommends a couple of procedures that she performs: the periodic exfoliation via light chemical peels, also called the "lunch time" peel, and microdermabrasion, an alternative to chemical exfoliation. These can be maintained between visits with home products that contain an alpha hydroxy acid. Retinoic acid (Retin-A, Renova). Retinol products, and topical vitamin C an anti-oxidant, can produce significant improvements in skin quality. A consultation with an aesthetician is suggested for specific recommendations.

For people with more severe sun damage, there are a number of procedures that can be used. Deeper chemical peels, using trichloroacetic acid (TCA), or the Obagi blue peel, involve down time but do provide deeper penetration. The Quantum Fotofacial intense-pulsed light therapy is a new treatment for sun damage with no down time. It involves a series of five to six treatments, three weeks apart. The

Fotofacial targets blotchy pigmentation and broken blood vessels, resulting from sun exposure, and is a good treatment for rosacea. Dermabrasion and laser resurfacing with one to two weeks down time before makeup can be applied may be considered for more severe solar damage and deeper wrinkles.

Before surgical treatments, there are a variety of maintenance treatments that we use to "buy" time to improve mild skin problems and prevent some problems from worsening. Botox is a very effective treatment to improve scowl lines between the eyebrows and soften crows feet. The Botox injections are performed in the office and the effects last between four to six months. We also utilize a variety of injectable materials (Collagen, Dermalogen and Cymetra) to plump wrinkles, especially, the smile lines and the pesky wrinkles around the mouth that cause lipstick bleed. These are all temporary though and require periodic reinjections. Dermal grafts (Alloderm and Dermaplast) last longer but require a minor in-office surgical procedure.

Once past the point of superficial skin care treatments, surgery becomes the focus to combat the effects of aging, gravity and individual genetics. The trend in plastic surgery is to perform smaller procedures in younger patients. The best results will be achieved when the skin still has elasticity and the wrinkles are not severe. Most of my patients want cosmetic surgery to make the way they look on the outside match the way they

feel inside. But people must consider that plastic surgery is not for everyone, and that determination must be made between the physician and the patient.

There are many procedures plastic surgeons perform. The most common "first" procedure is typically done on the eyelids around the age of 40. This is called a blepharoplasty in which an ellipse of skin is removed from the upper eyelid. A browlift can often be performed endoscopically, using a few small incisions behind the hairline. For the lower eyelids, excess skin can be removed via an incision just below the lash line. Fat bags can be modified through this incision or through an invisible incision inside the eyelid and is often combined with laser resurfacing to smooth the wrinkles.

As aging progresses, the cheeks descend, jowls form and excess skin of the neck becomes apparent. A facelift improves the lower face and neck, eliminating jowls and tightening the neck. Through an incision in front of the ear and extending behind the ear, excess skin is removed from the face, and excess fat from the neck and the deeper, strong layer of tissue underneath the skin (SMAS) is tightened. The facelift is not reserved for those over 60. In fact, it is best to perform the procedure before the excesses are severe. The younger patient may be a candidate for a mini-facelift, removing the skin excess through an incision in front of the ears only. Someone with only a small excess may benefit from an isolated neck lift. Liposuction in the



Before



After

neck can be performed only when neck skin excess is minimal.

With each category of procedures, there is a wide variety of techniques that can be used. Each person first must be assessed on an individual basis to determine which procedure and technique best meets his or her goals. Pros and cons should be thoroughly discussed with the doctor and all questions answered to the satisfaction of the patient.

Dr. Anson is certified by both the American Board of Plastic Surgery and the American Board of Surgery. She completed her plastic surgery residency and microsurgery fellowship at New York University regarded as the premier institution for plastic surgery training. Dr. Anson completed a general surgery residency and received her MD degree at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Prior to opening her private practice in Las Vegas, Dr. Anson was on the faculty as assistant professor at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque training new plastic surgeons. Dr. Anson was named in Best Doctors in America in the last two editions. Both Las Vegas Life Magazine and Las Vegas Magazine named her in the Best Doctors in Las Vegas. Dr. Anson is the author of multiple medical journal articles and book chapters.

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