

Preserve Your Beauty Now



By Don J. Fontana, MD, PA

We are our parent's children and the genetic component of inheritance determines both our body chemistry and our physical predisposition to physical change. Simply choose your parent wisely, and you could have the eternal glow of youth. We cannot choose our parents, and it is therefore easy to rationalize our physical appearance as "predetermined." Nothing could be less untrue. A casual stroll down the cosmetic aisle of a department store, health food store or salon all support the idea that looking and feeling youthful is possible.

Nearly everyone knows the basis of maintaining good health and therefore beauty. Limit your exposure to sun/ultra-violet light by always wearing sun block.

Do not smoke under any circumstances. Limit alcohol consumption. Get as much rest as possible. Exercise in moderation for a minimum of 2 ½ hours per week. Avoid close relationships with people who are always "negative" as this exposure may change your attitude toward life. Have fun, be positive and laugh as much as possible. Laughter is a great healer.

What happens when, despite maintaining this lifestyle, mother age creeps into your life and you are unhappy with the appearance of the face staring at you in the mirror? You have many options, many of which are not invasive and reasonably inexpensive. Exfoliating your skin is the first step in maintaining moisture. Exfoliating your skin means removing the dry layer of outer skin, which if not removed will block the absorption of water into your skin. The skin can be exfoliated by physical means or by applying exfoliating agents.

The methods of physically exfoliating your skin include chemical peels of all varieties, microdermabrasion, and fractional laser resurfacing. Topical agents used for exfoliating the skin are usually applied at night before bedtime. The cream softens the outer dry layer of skin, which is removed upon washing.

More thorough methods of exfoliating

the skin and improving skin texture and lightening skin pigmentation are chemical peels. ViPeel® is a new generation of facial peels which are painless and very effective. There is a short two-day down time during the peeling process. The ViPeel can be applied to patients of all skin types.

Microdermabrasion is also an effective means of exfoliating the skin. Just as the ViPeel, microdermabrasion is an office procedure. Patients experience a very light stinging sensation when it is applied and like a ViPeel patients see an improvement in the fine wrinkles around the eyes. It is less lasting than a chemical peel but very useful if you wish to have a refreshed look shortly before a special event.

Fractional laser resurfacing is a treatment that has become popular. It is effective, but only after 4-5 treatments administered over a 3-5 month period. Due to the laser technology, the cost of treatment can be significant compared to chemical peels. Down time after each procedure is longer, leaving the skin red and inflamed for 5-7 days. Patients who decide not to complete the necessary 4-5 treatments see very little, if any improvement.

Part 2 of this series will discuss skin care including facial moisturizers and other techniques.