

As a Dermatologist for over 27 years, I've seen remarkable **advances in anti-aging treatments and products**. Years ago, the only options were chemical peels and the ones that "really" worked came with some pretty dicey potential side effects. Then came the CO2 laser. Very effective in the right hands, but the treatment itself and the healing were only for the brave-hearted.

Today's lasers are beyond anything I ever would have dreamed of 20 years ago. We have incredible technology in the form of the new fractionalized laser called Fraxel. Super fast healing, super results, and super satisfaction. It wipes out brown spots, fine wrinkles and sun damage and literally gives your skin something to smile about. It's fast becoming the **most popular skin rejuvenation treatment** in my office. We've also begun using it for acne scarring and the results there are equally impressive.

There are lasers for spider veins and varicose veins, Rosacea, scars and stretch marks; lights for acne and sun damage; a special combination therapy for cystic acne that finally power-houses even the long-term resistant severe kind, radio frequency for tightening sagging skin and of course, **the most magic of potions – Botox**.

Botox remains the #1 requested treatment of any age. It's not just for those who already have dynamic wrinkles and furrows, it's being used now by younger people who want to **prevent** them from happening in the first place.

A close second to Botox is the treatment of brown spots. A "gift" for many from the sun, and for others from hormones, brown spots and melasma are particularly embarrassing to women. Between the new Fraxel laser, Fotofacial and de-pigmentation systems such as Cosmelan, many of my patients can throw out the coverup creams and rely on sunscreen and a touch of blush. Melasma and brown spots aren't age specific conditions. They affect teens **and** grandmothers!

Probably the most frustrating of all the issues out there is Acne Scarring. Acne by itself is devastating. The scars that come after can be just as psychologically damaging. **Acne Scars are notoriously difficult to treat** and unfortunately many people believe the hype that claims scars can be removed. I never tell a patient I can "remove" scars, but I can certainly improve them. Between collagen-stimulating lasers like Smoothbeam, and redness-eliminating lasers such as Vbeam...and now the new Fraxel laser to resurface and smooth the skin, acne scar sufferers have a much bigger arsenal at their disposal.

Sundamage...which I'll nominate as the 4th most frequent reason for office visits, affects both men and women. The average age when the damage surfaces enough to become a cosmetic concern is typically in the mid-30's, but I see patients in their early 20's who have been sun worshippers. No matter the age, they are all distressed to see they **could have invested \$8 in some sunscreen and avoided the "tanning" (think leather) of their skin**. Fotofacial, Fraxel and Photo Dynamic Therapy reverse much of the accumulated damage that results in hyper-pigmentation, wrinkles and rough skin.

Sagging skin and jowls are another primary concern of women in their 40's. It's supremely frustrating to feel so much younger on the inside than you do on the outside. Skin tightening with Radio Frequency – Thermage is my choice- allows a postponement or avoidance of plastic surgery. If all you need is some tightening and aren't super saggy, it's a pretty effective way to have a more defined jaw line and a firmer appearance. It's a one-time treatment that improves skin firmness over time as new collagen is formed.

Dermal fillers are another widely used tool to change the look of aging skin. Temporary fillers such as Restylane, Cosmoderm, and the new Juvederm give **instant wrinkle and line reduction**. Radiesse, actually considered an injectable implant rather than a filler, lasts up to 2 years. And Sculptra, a collagen stimulator, restores volume in cheeks and in the temples that aging takes away. From lines to plumped up sensuous lips, the fillers "fill the bill". There are other temporary and more permanent fillers in the FDA pipeline, and even a "self-filler" that uses your own cells - called Isolagen – that is in clinical trial stage.

All these procedures work to "turn back the clock", but what one must realize is that **prevention** of accelerated aging is available to anyone. **The Number 1 prevention tool is Sunscreen**. Using an SPF 30 Sunscreen every day, rain or shine, is vital to protecting your skin from DNA changes caused by the sun. Take a look at your derriere. It's probably pretty smooth - no wrinkles or brown spots, right? If your entire body had not had sun exposure, you'd look pretty darn good...no matter what your age. **My advice?** Buy a good sunscreen..and then use it all the time.

The best topical corrective product ever invented is Retin-A. It causes an ongoing exfoliation of the skin and that in turn keeps the collagen production up, the wrinkle formation down and if you're a Retin-A user, you won't have zits. It can be too much to handle for some, in which case a retinol can be substituted as a 2nd tier product.. Retin-A is prescription, but Retinol is not.

Cosmeceuticals, those products that have **bio-active ingredients**, are a huge boost to delay and minimize the effects of aging. Ingredients like idebenone, DMAE, TGF-Beta (tissue growth factor) and others cause products to do much more than simply moisturize.

Antioxidants, include Idebenone (Prevage), Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Green Tea, Grape Seed Extract and Alpha Lipoic Acid. These ingredients stop the damage from free radicals (think about how rust affects metal).

Another **overlooked magic bullet** is water. I'm not kidding. Water. Bottled is best, and it's more important than you imagine. We live in a desert and most of us walk around partially dehydrated from that alone. Drink more plain water than anything else. Caffeine, alcohol and the chemicals in sodas assure that your skin won't have a fighting chance to stay supple and clear.

What else? Sleep. Get your zzz's. Your body goes into repair mode while you sleep. Give it a chance. You'll be more productive, feel better, be nicer and you will look better-guaranteed.