

*Great Skin at Any Age* |

# Lifelong Skin Care Beauty Secrets

by Mark Taylor, M.D.

When we see someone our own age with beautiful skin, it's natural to compare our problem skin to theirs and then blame Mother Nature. No so fast. Beautiful skin is no accident. How many babies do you know, for example, with bad skin? The question that should be asked is, what can we do to keep our skin "baby" beautiful?

## Start Protection Early

The most important key to lifelong beautiful skin is sun protection.

Without it, the damage of ultraviolet light on the skin begins early. (For example, freckles in children are an early sign of sun damage.)

Then, as we age, the damage continues to accumulate. Over a lifetime, the result is premature aging, brown spots, thinning skin, broken blood vessels, damaged collagen and elastin, and wrinkled, sagging, rough,

and coarse skin—and in its worst form, skin cancers, including deadly melanomas. Don't think if you opt for a tanning booth that you outsmart nature. While the sun's rays have a broader spectrum, the artificial rays produced in tanning booths can be equally damaging.

When choosing a sunscreen or sunblock, protection from both UVA and UVB light is necessary to avoid sun damage. We recommend products from both SkinCeuticals and La Roche-Posay, since they cover a broad spectrum of both the UVA and UVB ranges (something drugstore lotions don't). And remember, when you are outside, it is recommended that sunscreen be applied liberally every two hours to give maximum protection. Wide-brimmed hats, sun-protective clothing, and shade are also important weapons in your skin's battle against the sun.

### Control Acne

One of the most devastating skin problems people experience is facial scarring caused by acne. Some children will start to get acne lesions as early as 10 years of age. The condition typically worsens after puberty and may affect some people for years into adulthood. To keep skin beautiful, treat acne early to prevent or reduce it and the permanent scarring that may otherwise result.

Simple acne may respond to daily cleaning or over-the-counter products like benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid. More stubborn cases are best treated by a dermatologist who can prescribe stronger medications. For many patients, aggressive control of acne during their teenage years will be sufficient to prevent scarring. However, others who have a strong family history of acne may need to undergo potent acne treatments for many years.

### Remove Dots and Spots

As we age, many of us will develop age spots, freckles, melasma (uneven patches of pigmentation), scars, cysts, and papules. In addition, pores often become more prominent as oil glands age.

If any of this sounds familiar, no worries. The good news is that these unsightly skin conditions can be efficiently treated with the right treatments or products. Using a product with hydroquinone can help control melanin

production. We really like the Obagi Skincare Line which has a variety of products with hydroquinone. However, hydroquinone should not be used long term so please see your skin care professional before you begin. Additionally, the use of vitamin A and/or alpha-hydroxy acid can be beneficial. Not only will these products help correct and treat, but they will also help maintain and prevent.

### Moisturize

Maintaining the integrity and protective quality of the skin can be achieved through frequent use of moisturizers and barrier repair products. In a study comparing Retin A to good moisturization, vigorous use of moisturizer and sunscreen was almost as effective as the prescription Retin A treatment. You should look for a moisturizer with hyaluronic acid to help replenish water loss which occurs with age, stress, dry climates, high altitude, etc. A good suggestion is layering a hyaluronic acid gel, like SkinCeuticals B5 gel, underneath your moisturizer to help lock in moisture. Products with ingredients like aloe vera, shea butter, and glycerin (to name a few) can help. We really like Immuderm, which is a glycerin and shea butter-based moisturizer that not only hydrates, but helps to heal and soothe the skin as well. It also serves as a great post-procedure moisturizer.

### In Conclusion

Starting early with good skin care is important; however, getting on a good regimen and sticking to it is what matters most. It can be a bit overwhelming, as there are so many products on the market today. However, the great news is that skin care has advanced dramatically over the last few years. Many of today's current products are truly wonderful and easy to use. See a skin care professional to help point you in the right direction.

If you'd like help getting started, call Anne-Michele Apothica today and schedule a skin care consultation. And remember, beautiful skin is not an accident—it is a commitment. ©