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Skin Rejuvenation

Ultraviolet light, whether from the sun or tanning booths, damages the pigment-producing cells, the skin cells, and the elastic fibers of the skin. In addition to causing skin cancer, virtually everything that we consider to be aging of the skin is photo damage. The most common signs of sun damage are fine lines and wrinkles around the eyes, forehead, and mouth, and light brown and white colored spots. On the neck, sun damage can cause increased tiny blood vessels called Poikiloderma of Civatte.

Fortunately today there are many things that can be done to help to prevent and reverse photo damage to improve the appearance of your skin. It takes at least several months of treatment to see the benefits. Remember it took years to get the sun damage, so you can't expect it to go away overnight. We recommend photographing the face at the start of treatment and again after 6 months of treatment for comparison and evaluation of the initial benefits of treatment. Insurance companies do not cover any of the treatments for skin rejuvenation.

1. Sunscreen moisturizer – Preventing further damage is one of the most important aspects of skin photorejuvenation. There are 2 main types of ultraviolet light – UVA and UVB. UVB is what causes burns and is most prevalent during the summer and between 10 am and 2 pm. UVA plays a very significant role in photo damage and is present and at steady rate during most of the day and during the winter as well. We recommend a broad-spectrum sunscreen with at least SPF 30 to be applied daily year round (Cetaphil, Lubriderm, Neutrogena all make excellent, cosmetically elegant daily sunscreen moisturizers). Remember that the sun protection does not last all day – so if you are planning a day or afternoon outdoors you should reapply your sunscreen every 2-3 hours when outdoors.

2. Retinoids (tretinoin, Renova, Retin-A, Tazorac) – This is a biologically active agent which has been scientifically proven to reduce the fragmented elastic fibers in the skin and increase the amount of healthy collagen and to reduce fine lines and wrinkles. Its main side effect is that it can irritate the skin. If this happens then you should use it every other day for about a month and then go back to daily use.

3. Hydroquinones (Lustra, Tri-Luma) – These are bleaching agents, some of which are combined with sunscreens, retinol, or glycolic acid. They are scientifically proven to reduce brown spots and irregular pigmentation. Most people have no side effects, but rarely people can get irritation or increased pigmentation.

4. Pulsed dye laser – The pulsed dye laser is selectively absorbed by blood vessels. It can destroy tiny spider veins (often called broken blood vessels) on the face and can destroy the tiny blood vessels found in poikiloderma (reddish-brown discoloration of the neck and upper chest). It takes 2 or 3 treatments to completely eliminate the vessels. The treatments do not hurt but do leave a purple bruise that lasts for 1 – 2 weeks.