

Dermatology Associates of Plymouth Meeting
Newsletter
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The Science of Staying Young—Resolutions for the New Year!

There is no way around the fact that every body and everything ages biologically over time—truly a process that everyone grieves over. There are many practical steps to maintain skin as it ages and to fight against the external factors that cause these changes.

These skin care resolutions for the New Year are simple and inexpensive. Like everything we at Dermatology Associates recommend, all are supported by medical research.

1) Discard old, used beauty products

You can transfer bacteria from your fingers to face creams leading to growth of micro organisms. We suggest you discard products one year after opening them. Bacteria can also grow in mascara, creating a risk for eye infections. The FDA does not obligate cosmetic manufacturers to print expiration dates on product labels in the United States but in Europe, regulations do require products to be labeled if the durability is less than 30 months.

2) Stop smoking

Nonsmokers generally have younger appearing skin than smokers who appear to have premature aging of the skin. Research into this area is conflicting. One study suggested that smoking a pack a day over decades was associated with skin changes equivalent of almost a decade of chronological aging to the face. Another study found no difference in skin elasticity between smokers and non smokers. Studies linking smoking to skin cancer have been published but it is not clear whether this finding is related to smokers sunbathing more than nonsmokers.

3) Stop squeezing!

People who squeeze their pimples to help the situation may actually be aggravating the problem. Self manipulation can lead to deeper infection and pigmentary changes. In other words, scarring!

4) Sleep more, stress less!

Stress can impair the skin's barrier function. A very interesting study compared 25 women who volunteered to participate in mock interviews and 11 women who volunteered for one night of sleep deprivation. Temporary stress caused the volunteer's

skin to recover from wounds more slowly than without stress. Sleep deprived lab rats develop lesions on their paws and tails while rested rats do not. Certainly, humans are not concerned about “paws and tails” but stress can contribute to flares of hair loss, psoriasis and eczema.

5) Wear Sunscreens!

Clinical studies have shown that frequent use of sunscreens prevents skin cancer. Sunscreen can also inhibit sun induced changes to the skin’s pigment and texture. Look for sunscreens that contain zinc oxide, titanium or Mexoryl.

6) Simplify

Over treatment at home can lead to irritation. Using too many acidic things at once such as vitamin A, lactic acid, ascorbic acid and salicylic acid can cause red and inflamed skin. Use a mild cleanser, moisturizer with sunscreen, potentially one antioxidant cream and finally, one antiwrinkle cream such as Retin A. That is all you need.

7) Wash our face

The skin picks up environmental debris during the day. Washing the skin at night gently removes this debris and gives the skin a rest from exposure to possible irritants. Do not apply a greasy night cream however—this is just another irritant.

8) Re think the \$100 cream!!

The FDA does not regulate cosmetics and does not require manufacturers to publish rigorous studies on the efficacy of their products. Your chances of achieving good skin are not directly proportional to the amount of money you spend. When you purchase “high end creams” you are mostly paying for packaging, advertising and celebrity endorsements.