

Five Gifts to Give Yourself this Season

By Anna D. Guanche, MD



Tis the season for parties and gifts. It will soon be time to reconnect with family and friends, enjoy delicious dishes and dress in your finest. Before you break the bank with holiday purchases, why not choose a few things for yourself during this brief calm before the storm?

1> Firm Up

Yes, Pilates, abdominal work and training for a triathlon can firm you up. You've probably tried (most) of those things. If there are still some soft jiggly spots, then you may want to treat yourself to a non-invasive firming procedure. **Thermage®**, **Ultherapy** or **VelaShape™** are three such popular procedures. **Thermage®** is a radiofrequency device that tightens the skin of the abdomen, thighs, buttocks and arms. **Ultherapy** is the latest, most effective skin-tightening device for the face and neck. Off-label, it can be used to tighten the skin over the knees and elbows as well. **VelaShape™** is effective for cellulite on the arms, abdomen and thighs, preparing you for those leggy cocktail dresses.

2> Rock Your LBD

Yes! The holiday season heralds dressed-up cocktail parties and, inevitably, the LBD (little black dress). Are there pesky spider veins on your legs? Are there bulges in the belly or love handles that mar your hourglass figure? There are solutions for both, and now's the time to do them, since final results from both procedures are apparent in about two months. **Sclerotherapy**, or leg vein injections, get rid of spider veins. Hypertonic saline is a safe, effective sclerosant that seals these non-functioning vessels and makes them effectively disappear. For the bulges, **CoolSculpting** can be employed. With no downtime, this procedure will allow you to continue shopping and decorating while the fat gradually clears away. No time to get into our office for these procedures? Try **Spanx** for instant body contouring and **MAC** sundressing leg bronzer to mimic a smooth, even tan and camouflage imperfections until you have time for a more permanent fix.

3> Gloss Up

Glossy hair, shiny nails and glowing skin are signs of vibrancy. As we age, hair texture changes and becomes dry and frizzy, a subtle sign of aging. For healthier hair, nails and skin, biotin, glucosamine and a multivitamin with iron are great supplements. A lean, high-protein diet provides the raw materials necessary for your body to form

keratin. Beyond that, **Latisse®** can be applied (off label) to the scalp to encourage hair growth. For shiny hair, I love **John Frieda® Brilliant** color-matched shampoo and conditioner. Occasionally, a small amount of silicone-free **L'Oreal Paris EverSleek®** can smooth down the frizz. This item should be used sparingly as it can cause thin hair to appear less voluminous. In addition to the considerations above, a great hairdresser will steer you away from overprocessing. There is no need to drive to the Westside; we have excellent colorists right here in our own neighborhood.

4> Mini Makeover

For a quick pick-me-up without surgery, take 10 years off with a liquid facelift. A combination of injectables, artfully placed, can provide a natural-looking, rejuvenated appearance. Add a peel and effective skin care regimen and voila! You are ready to face the season with confidence. **Juvederm®** in the cheeks, nasolabial folds and hollows under the eyes can provide significant improvement with little down time. At the same time, a chemical brow lift plus reducing lines on the upper face (while maintaining facial expression) with **Botox** will freshen your look. Minimal down time peels such as the **Beta Lift** or **Jessner** brighten sallow skin and reduce pigment. First-time injectable patients see the most dramatic changes and are sometimes even moved to tears when they see the improvement.

5> Check Up

"You better check yourself before you wreck yourself!" Zach Galifianakis says in the movie "Due Date." He certainly has a point.

Check Your Self. Literally. Take charge of your health by observing any changes. Breast self-examination should be a monthly habit. Now there is a hilarious app that will help remind you. It's called "Your Man Reminder," and is available for download at iTunes. Remember that men can develop breast cancer, too. Conducting a body self-exam to search for changing moles is also important. Look over your body in the mirror; look at the soles of your feet and in between your toes. If you see a changing or new dark mole, a growth that bleeds or scabs without injury, then it is time to see a dermatologist. After all, peace of mind can be the greatest gift.

Here's wishing you a healthy, fabulous holiday season. It is the time of year to give to all of your loved ones, including yourself. ■

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