

Tis the Season to be Beautiful

With the Holiday season coming up, we've invited an expert to guide us in looking beautiful. **By Diana Lyle**



Dr. Anna Guanche is a respected board-certified Dermatologist and Dermatologic Surgeon who aids in the teaching of both medical students and residents at UCLA Medical Center. She is a member of the clinical faculty at UCLA's David Geffen School of Medicine, as well as a staff member at UCLA Olive View Medical Center. Her full-time practice, Bella Skin Institute, is in Calabasas where she specializes in aesthetic procedures while caring for all types of skin conditions. Her specialty emphasis is in the areas of cosmetic dermatology and laser surgery.



There are many choices available to you to make sure that you are looking and feeling gorgeous as you slip into your cute party dress. By the way, this article is for guys too because we all want to ward off the signs of stress and aging.

**INSTANTLY EFFECTIVE
HOLIDAY FACIAL BOOSTERS**
Botox and Juvederm

For the Holiday season, the quickest pick-me-up for the face is Botox and Juvederm combinations. These two procedures - done together - have minimal to no downtime. Botox is an injectable that can lift the brows and smooth out the upper face, while Juvederm is a filler that restores volume and gets rid of lines in the lower face. This is a long-lasting (9 months to a year) smoother and filler. With the use of newer techniques,

Juvederm provides excellent, instant results with minimal discomfort and minimal to no downtime. Add a Jessner's peel to brighten the skin and voila, you have been rejuvenated!

Radiesse

This is an injectable cheek lift similar to Juvederm where the upper face is given volume. Children usually have plump, healthy cheeks and as we age, our cheeks sag. Keeping them lifted and healthy-looking through injectable Radiesse gives an instant youthful appearance.

Fraxel

This is a laser procedure series that goes deeply into the skin to remodel lines, pores and acne scars. Although it goes deeply, the newer fractionated technology does not require much downtime: 2 to 4 days of redness that can be covered with makeup. The satisfaction rate for this procedure is high (over 95%).

VBeam

This laser is perfect for getting rid of redness and broken blood vessels in the face. Tried, true and affordable, this laser treatment has about 2 days of down-time. There are many other procedures as well, to get rid of brown spots on the hands, to treat melasma (the mask of pregnancy) and to get rid of little growths on the face, to tighten skin, to heighten cheekbones, and get rid of unwanted hair. Dr. Guanche's algorithm for choosing the procedures is that it should have an excellent benefit to risk ratio (first, do no harm). Also, it should be the least invasive and least expensive option that will give the patient the desired result.

BEHAVIORS THAT SLOW DOWN OR SPEED UP THE AGING PROCESS

The Sun

The single most effective skin saver that we know of is to avoid UV sun exposure. Putting sunscreen on before lying out doesn't count. Sunscreen and sun avoidance is the key. Elastin, which is the rubber in your skin that allows the skin to bounce back without leaving any lines, is degraded by UV exposure. Since our

bodies don't produce any more elastin after age 40, it is critically important to avoid damaging the existent elastin that is there. This means sun protection and sun avoidance.

Vitamin D

It turns out that you only need 15 minutes of sun exposure to provide enough vitamin D3 for two weeks. Vitamin D doesn't justify tanning beds or laying out. Incident sun exposure (like walking from where your car is parked) is plenty, especially in California.

Smoking

There is nothing good to be said about smoking. Cigarettes and nicotine cause vasoconstriction, decreasing blood flow to all of the organs, including the skin. This causes the skin to look sallow and deflated, and it promotes wrinkling. It also changes the voice, making it low and hoarse, the characteristic of an "old" voice.

Alcohol

Drinking alcohol in excess dehydrates the skin. As we get older, our hangovers really show in our faces. After drinking excessively, we look exhausted and dull; so does our skin.

Excessive Stress/Lack of Sleep

Both stress and lack of sleep are detrimental to our appearance. Check out every President before versus after their term! You have more control over your stress level than anyone else. Meditation, life balance, Yoga, Pilates - even counseling can help you de-stress.

The Benefits of Water

At the outset of the day, right after you brush your teeth, drink a full glass of water. It may be more than you feel like at the time, but hydrated skin looks better and a hydrated body has more stamina.

Anti-aging is a science in itself. Many attempts at defeating the aging process have been reported over the years, from sleeping in a bag (Madonna) to sleeping in an oxygen chamber (Michael Jackson). The bottom line is we haven't found the silver bullet for anti-aging yet.

Helpful Products

(Please note that Dr. Guanche is not a consultant for any of these products. Furthermore, these products do not substitute for individual medical advice, nor are they scientifically proven. But anecdotally, and by trial and error, they seem to be helpful.)

Glucosamine

This supplement is marketed for joint health and reduction of inflammation. It is great for the cartilage, and cartilage has largely the same type of collagen as the skin. Some experts believe that glucosamine makes its way to your skin collagens and prevents inflammation and damage there.

Vitamin C and E

These are antioxidants. They reduce inflammation and what we call "free radicals," or by-products in the tissues that are thought to be damaging to cells. Vitamins C and E are often found in topical anti-aging creams, but the truth is we are not sure that they are staying active on the skin and getting to their targets. It doesn't hurt to apply them topically - or better still - orally. They are found in most multivitamins.

Activated Magnesium, Calcium and Membrane-stabilizing complex (2-AEP) These are vitamin supplements that, according to the makers, can stabilize cell membranes, making them more resilient against injury and infection.

Resveratrol

This is the latest anti-aging supplement. It is a powerful anti-oxidant that may actually prove to promote longevity. Studies are currently under way, but compound is available as a vitamin supplement. Because this is the latest craze, there are quite a few look-alikes, so beware when you are buying!

Cosmetics and Makeup

Dr Guanche does not officially endorse any make-up but she is a proponent of Chanel Double Perfection Compact for non acne-prone skin. For acne-prone skin, she recommends starting with mineral-based makeup. Remember that make-up and breakouts are a trial-and-error process. One needs to try different oil-free bases, making sure that they match your skin tone as closely as possible. It may take time, patience and a few dollars to find the makeup that perfectly agrees with your skin.

Low-Carbohydrate Diet

Some researchers believe that 'sugar peaks' - that our bodies sustain right after we eat - can lead to a hardening of the tissues through a process called "glycation." Just as diabetics develop premature organ damage and hardening of the vessels, some say even the transient high sugar levels in people with normal insulin function can be damaging.

The best way to avoid these sugar peaks is to follow a low-carbohydrate diet or at least avoid extremely sugary treats/drinks.

Human Individuality

The most effective treatments must be tailored to a specific person's problem/wishes. Dermatologists like Dr. Guanche offer a variety of solutions for different skin types, age groups and budgets. Each patient comes with their own "peeves". They may have one line on their upper lip that drives them nuts. They may have a list of complaints as long as their arm. Some cosmetic issues may bother them more than others. Some fixes are simpler and less costly than others. It isn't a cookie-cutter approach. That's why it is important to speak with your Dermatologist so that he/she can evaluate your skin, listen to your concerns, and develop a plan that best meets your goals, budget and ability to take 'down-time'.

When to Have Surgery

When all of the non-surgical options of prevention and maintenance have been employed, when there is a problem that is beyond what current technology can improve upon, then the last resort is surgery. One example is ptosis (sagging). Early sagging can be prevented by all of the good habits mentioned above, or it can be treated with Thermage. But what if it is too late for that? What if there is more excess skin on the neck or eyelids than a non-invasive procedure can fix? At this point an Eyelid Lift or Lower Facelift may be necessary. Always try the minimally-invasive route first. Hopefully, as technology improves exponentially, there may come a time when invasive surgery may be almost completely eliminated.

Dr Guanche concludes, "The wonderful aspect about Dermatology is that it is evolving rapidly with new research and new techniques coming out every year. It's an exceptionally dynamic medical arena where the patient has several up-to-the-minute choices that are available to them. It's becoming much easier to look beautiful with all this expertise and technology at our disposal!"

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