

Erasing

*Summer*



# SUN DAMAGE

By Anna D. Guanche, MD

**H**ow was your summer? Hopefully, you had a chance to enjoy some adventures. Whether you were fishing, hiking, sight-seeing or reading by the pool, you likely had a blast. These activities allowed you to rest and recharge, accumulate new knowledge and experiences ... and some sun damage!

You want your friends and family to see the islands in your photo book and not on your cheeks! The term "pay to play" applies here. The more fun you had, the more evidence you are likely to show in the form of brown spots and wrinkles on your skin (even if you wore sunscreen). Luckily, we can reverse a lot of this damage with the right dermatological treatments and great skin care.

**Go Lightly.** Light peels such as Jessner's or salicylic acid peels have little down time and great results. I usually recommend a series of three to four, about three weeks apart. These peels result in a slight flaking that resembles dry skin. Sun protection with SPF greater than 60 is important for the following seven days. A post-peel skin care regimen is more effective when the thick stratum corneum of the skin is opened. Active ingredients penetrate the skin more effectively, and the skin looks smoother and brighter.

**Go Deeper.** Fraxel 1550 is a fractionated resurfacing device that goes deeper in the skin but with less down time. A sunburn-like appearance is expected for two to three days. After day three, the skin looks smoother, plump, and more even. A series of four to six treatments is effective for setting the "reset button." Acne scars and deep lines are remodeled. Pigment is improved. For a laser

peel with a bit more down time but which removes pigment evenly, two treatments with the Fraxel 1927 are recommended.

**Spot Treat.** The Perfecta is a laser device that can be used to spot-treat individual lesions. It is great for the dark freckles, or "liver spots," that form on the hands, arms, legs and face. This treatment has minimal down time. Brown spots turn browner, shrivel and peel off within seven to 14 days, depending on the area of the body treated. Hands and lower legs are the most popular areas treated with this device.

**De-Freckle.** Freckles are cute, until they start becoming larger and darker and coalescing into brown spots. Have you noticed that the skin on your chest and neck looks different than the sun-protected skin covered by your bathing suit? The Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) device is what we use to perform photo-facials. These are recommended in a series of four. The treatment has very little down time. It targets brown photo-damaged areas that are noticeable on the sun-exposed areas of the body such as the chest, face and arms. It also builds collagen and reduces redness.

**Maintain.** Besides a post-procedure regimen, we recommend a maintenance regimen, which includes sun protection and antioxidants, glycolics and retinoids. People ask me how long will the results from these procedures last. This depends on what you do with your skin afterward. If you lie in the sun, don't wear sunscreen, drink excessively, smoke, are in poor health or in a high-stress state, the results may not last long. If you wear sunscreen, drink plenty of water, rest, practice moderation and avoid smok-

ing or tanning, the results should last a long time. In some cases, the skin improves and recovers to an even healthier state.

As we say a fond farewell to the summer, we should also say goodbye to some of its unwanted effects. Caring for the skin with procedures, products or both will help you maintain a youthful glow. When deciding what treatment choice is right for you, remember that all skin types are not the same. Understanding your skin type, what you would like to correct and the safest, most effective way to correct it are required. Be sure to seek advice from a qualified professional who has access to a range of devices and products from which to choose. ■

*Dr. Guanche is not a consultant for, nor receives consulting fees or compensation from, any of the product or device companies mentioned in this article.*

