TRANSFORMATION OF A LIFETIME GENERATIONAL SKIN CARE

REGARDLESS OF A PERSON'S AGE, SKIN IS A partner for life. As with any long-term relationship, things can be expected to change along the way. The appearance of skin, what does and does not work in a maintenance routine and the way skin should be cared for varies greatly from the time a person is in their 20s to the time they reach their 40s. That age span represents the lion's share of the market.

The International SPA Association's 2006 study on spa goers reported that more than three quarters (76 percent) of them fall between the ages of 18-54. Spa goers ranging in age from 35-54 account for nearly half that figure at 46 percent.

Skin care by decade

In order to take the best possible care of each generation's skin, you must understand the scientific factors affecting the skin of each age group, categorized by decade.

In a client's twenties, new skin cell production slows down significantly, as cells switch from a complete turnover every five to seven days to only turning over every 21 days. The slowdown causes fine lines to develop around the eyes and mouth. Additionally, photodamage often starts to appear in the form of freckles and spots.

Tips for the 20s:

- It is time to start some form of mild resurfacing. Advise clients to resurface at least twice weekly.
- Apply sun protection every day, rain or shine.
- Begin introducing antioxidants into skin care regimen for extra protection. The antioxidants also defend cells that are not yet fully damaged, shielding them from further harm.

The skin care routine established during one's twenties is a staple. When clients reach their thirties, they should continue the routine and add to it.

Stress starts to affect the skin when one enters their thirties. People in this age group are multi-tasking more than before; they are planning weddings, having babies and establishing themselves in their careers. The skin cell turnover cycle has slowed to 28 days, and pre-menopausal buildup is beginning to show. When the pre-menopausal hormones are combined with stress, the skin experiences a multitude of negative effects, which include adult onset acne, hormone-induced pigmentation, darkening of the skin above the lips and fine lines becoming fuller. ➔

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BY CELESTE HILLING

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Tips for the 30s:

- Anti-inflammatory products (BHAs like mango, shea butter and salicylic acid) and retinoids (vitamin A derivatives) should be added to the regimen.
- Inform clients that they may want to consider starting an actual treatment program for hyperpigmentation, combining daily resurfacing with professional treatments that utilize melanin suppressing agents.
- Advise clients to practice proactive stress reduction techniques such as yoga, Pilates and meditation.

For clients in their forties, take what you know about skin care for the twenties and thirties and incorporate additional measures with the daily regimen and regular treatments.

The forties are the decade of defense! Cells now turn over every 45 days, so it is critical to nourish and protect the skin, which is now drier and produces fewer elastins.

Tips for the 40s:

- Encourage daily resurfacing that includes regular in-clinic treatments (six times per year) and home care.
- Skin growth factors, vitamin C and peptides should be added to boost collagen and elastin production.

Of course, regardless of their age, emphasize the value of practicing sun safety, resurfacing, drinking water, eating well and proactively finding ways to de-stress.

Waging war on wrinkles

Social media makes it far too easy to share pictures and videos, which has magnified concern about wrinkles among the younger set. A recent survey by the Nielsen Company showed that two-thirds of U.S. consumers feel that the pressure to look good is greater now than ever before. The good news is that you can help relieve your clients of some of that pressure by building a smart arsenal to combat wrinkles.

First off, be honest with clients and inform them that there are no miracles when it comes to helping skin look smoother and reducing the appearance of lines. Suggest the following product arsenal outline as a guideline for their daily care regimen:

1. Cleanser containing AHA. Use twice a day to keep skin clean, irritant-free and pH balanced. These cleansers also help ready the skin for deep absorption of treatment products.

2. AHA exfoliator. Help clients select an AHA-based product to exfoliate the top layer of the skin. For AHA, I recommend glycolic with a concentration of eight to ten percent. For BHA, which exfoliates the skin's surface and inside the pores, I recommend salicylic acid in a concentration of 0.5-2.0 percent. Both AHA and BHA require a pH between three and four to effectively exfoliate the top layer of skin.

3. Vitamin A. Repairs abnormal cell production and accelerates healthy cell turnover while bringing collagen production back to some level of normalcy.

4. Lightweight moisturizer. Makes skin look smoother, especially in dry weather. Newer generation hydrators can include advanced peptide technology to help improve cell turnover and response.

5. Reliable sunscreen. Rain or shine, sunscreen is essential. Advise your clients that the

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only way to determine the quality of a sunscreen is to check the SPF number (it must be 15 or greater) and the active ingredient label to make sure it has UVA-blocking ingredients of either titanium dioxide, zinc oxide, and/or avobenzone (also called Parsol 1789 or butylmethoxydibenzone). If you purchase sunscreens outside the U.S., choose products that contain Mexoryl SX.

Whether your client is a member of Generation X or Y, focusing on education will help them achieve skin care health that will last a lifetime.

6. Skin lightening product. I recommend hydroquinone to improve the appearance of brown discolorations, acne scarring and uneven complexions by inhibiting melanin production. Look for formulas containing glycolic or salicylic acids, as they encourage cellular turnover.

Expert advice

To provide further guidance on how to educate your Gen X and Y clients on healthy skin care, I chatted with two licensed esthetics experts, Keely Jeters and Melissa Hastings, ages 20 and 32, respectively. The ages of the two women fit in perfectly with the demographics we are trying to reach.

An esthetician for two years, Keely is a member of Generation Y, and feels that her peers are not knowledgeable about skin care and view it as a luxury. She says that most of them have only been exposed to department and drug store brands, and therefore lack knowledge about the superiority of professional lines. Keely's advice to her peers is this: "If you spend the money on something that is not providing you with what you need for your skin, you will have to continue spending money to buy additional products. You should start with a line that will work so you don't need to throw away products and money."

Keely also emphasizes technology as the key tool for capturing the attention of Generation Yers. Use e-mail, Twitter and Facebook to reach out to them and combine your message with student discounts. Keely suggests speaking about skin care at area high schools and colleges, and offering demonstrations at salons and malls frequented by members of Generation Y.

Melissa Hastings has been an esthetician for four years. She was exposed to the beauty business growing up, as her mom owns a salon. Melissa feels that her Generation X peers have been educated about skin care through the Internet, and after spending so much money on unused products that are now overflowing from their cabinets, they are open to coaching. "Women in their thirties are more conscientious than those in their twenties," said Melissa. "We try to get them on a routine that they can commit to. You have to really listen to them to determine what they will realistically do each day for their skin. It is all about molding a routine that works for them."

Melissa emphasizes to clients that the products are only as good as the information that is communicated about them. She suggests reaching out to and educating Gen Xers through all types of media—social media, magazines, newspapers, TV, etc. "The younger generations are much more interested in skin care than previous ones," Melissa adds. "There's more awareness on sun, smoking, etc. and how they affect your appearance."

Whether your client is a member of Generation X or Y, education will enable them to achieve skin care health to last a lifetime. ■

Celeste Hilling *is the founder and CEO of Skin Authority. She is also the host of the nationally syndicated Internet radio show* Skin Health TODAY. *For more information go to www.skinauthority.com or www.skinhealthtoday.com.*

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