

7 Things Your Dermatologist Is Dying to Tell You About Your Skin

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Dermatologists have seen all kinds of skin-care concerns up close—from nasty breakouts to brutal sun damage and everything in between. So what do these pros really want to tell women about their skin? Here, eight derms share the one thing they want all of us to know. And trust us: You're going to want to heed their advice.

1. BE CONSISTENT

"If you use a new product, you need to use it every day for months before you will see a result. I'm a big fan of peptides. I use my Sea Radiance Rapid Eye Lift (\$79, searadiance.com) every morning and every evening. It contains peptides and antioxidants." —Debra Jaliman, M.D., New York City dermatologist and creator of Sea Radiance

2. BUT DON'T BE AFRAID TO CHANGE THINGS UP

"The skin-care regimen that worked for you for many years or even six months ago will change. That goes for the products we use on the skin as well as the structure of the face. Things change constantly, and good skin-care maintenance means being open to change and not sticking to what has always worked for you. The key is to be attuned to your skin and not be afraid of making changes and switching things up." —Paul Jarrod Frank, M.D., New York City-based cosmetic dermatologist (Kick-start your new, healthy routine with Women's Health's 12-Week Head-to-Toe Transformation!)

3. START AN ANTI-AGING ROUTINE ASAP

"You don't want to wait until you start seeing the signs of aging to take action. Your skin ages in a multitude of ways starting at an early age. You may see signs of sun damage like brown spots on your face appearing in addition to structural changes like bone resorption [the breakdown of bone tissue] and loss of fat pads which cause fine lines and wrinkles/jowling.

Therefore, use a broad spectrum sunscreen daily with an SPF 30 or higher, and reapply every two hours when in the sun. You should also moisturize, moisturize, moisturize to maintain the skin barrier. And non-invasive lasers may be used to ward off skin pigmentation and fine lines as well." -Marnie Nussbaum, M.D., New York City dermatologist

4. DRAMATIC WEIGHT LOSS CAN MAKE YOUR SKIN SAG

"One thing I'd like to tell all women is that after age 40, don't lose weight too quickly or too much. When we're younger, our faces stay smooth and lifted even when our bodies get lean. And, skin has more elasticity, so it bounces back when you lose weight quickly. After 40, if you lose too much weight, your eyes and cheeks get hollow, and your lips get thinner, making you look gaunt and severe. Skin has less elasticity, so it sags without the support of underlying facial fat. And, when you gain the weight back, it is more likely to go to your midsection, not your face." -Jessica Wu, M.D., Los Angeles-based dermatologist

5. DON'T SKIP THE DENTIST

"Visit your dentist for regular checkups and cleanings. Dental health and bone density are important for the prevention of perioral wrinkles. If you have poor dental health, it can cause a loss of bone density in the jaw and cheeks. The bones provide structure and support for the skin. Loss of this support can lead to wrinkles and sagging of the skin." -Debbie Palmer, M.D., board-certified dermatologist

6. SUPPLEMENTS CAN HELP

"Collagen supplementation is key! Protecting our precious proteins, such as collagen and elastin (topically and internally), gives us the best results long term. I advise my patients to support their collagen and essential nutrient levels using bioavailable supplements, such as NeoCell Collagen Beauty Builder(\$18, vitaminworld.com)." -Julie Russak, M.D., board-certified dermatologist and founder of Russak Dermatology Clinic

7. SUNSCREEN IS EVERYTHING

"The most important thing you can do to minimize skin aging is protect yourself from the sun. Even five minutes a day adds up over a lifetime. The fight against aging is a marathon not a sprint, and on a daily basis you need to exercise sun protective behavior and wear sunscreen. Avoid the sun between peak hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., wear sun-protective clothing, hats, and glasses, and use sunscreen with at least SPF 30." -Joshua Zeichner, M.D., director of cosmetic and clinical research in dermatology at Mount Sinai Hospital