

WRINKLES By Dr. John Fudens HMC

This is a condition that happens to others, older people, anybody and everybody but you. Then seemingly and suddenly you look in the mirror one day and where did those crow's feet come from around the corners of the mouth/eyes and the lines in and round the neck? Time could not have passed that quickly because you are still young at heart.

It seems that this modern day 21st century living and the sun are the main causations. Pollution continues to deplete the ozone level and allow an increase in ultraviolet (UV) radiation levels (there is a big disagreement as to whether ozone is being depleted but that is for another time to argue). This is the sole, claimed, reason for the increase in skin cancer in the US and other countries. In the US, skin cancer is the seventh most frequent cancer in Caucasians and the fastest increasing cancer overall.

Ninety per cent of the damage to our skin is the result of exposure to the sun called photo aging. Excessive and continuous tanning causes the skin to be wrinkled, leathery, blotchy with loss of skin elasticity. The skin is our largest and one of the most complex organs in the body. It is also the one we abuse the most. It protects the internal body from injury, light, chemicals, infection, regulates body temperature and is a sensing tactile organ. It is, after the liver, the most important organ to detoxify the body accounting for one quarter of the waste material. The body is 70% water and some skin cells are 90% water.

The skin mirrors our emotions and feelings by blushing from embarrassment, breaks out with blotches and hives from stress and goose bumps from fear. When the skin fails to function properly the lungs, kidneys, liver and intestines must work harder. Conversely when those organs breakdown the skin shows it by having warts, moles, liver spots, pimples, blemishes, rashes and eruptions.

Our skin protects us from the ravages of the free radicals, generated by sunlight, that attack body cells causing abnormal "cross linking" of the skin's collagen and elastic fibers. This causes the skin to lose elasticity, lowers the regeneration of new skin cells all of which contribute to premature aging and wrinkles among other things. The sun lowers collagen levels which is the skeleton of the soft tissue and is the body's main connective tissue providing tensile strength. Sunlight over stimulates elastic growth of skin cells so they thicken and lose elasticity resulting in wrinkles and sagging skin. To better understand what I have just written compare the skin on the back of your hand with the skin of the upper arm closest to the body near the armpit. Usually quite a difference where one part is sun exposed and the other is not.

But we do have defenses. The first is to stay out of the sun excessively and/or use sun blockers, protective clothing and floppy hats. Use the high number sun lotions and blockers if you must stay in the sun and apply frequently. The

second defense is to feed and nourish the skin with proper diet and supplements. These will allow collagen regrowth and stop the cross linking and loss of elasticity.

Antioxidants, internally, work wonders in combating the free radicals but did you know that antioxidants applied externally can protect and reverse the damaging (UV) radiation effects?

Studies show that ascorbate (vit C form) applied topically in a sunscreen protects and reduces UV damage redness by 22%. Retinyl palmitate (vit A form) increases skin protein and collagen, replaces lost skin elasticity, protects against skin cancer, thickens the epidermis and increases DNA content. Tocopherol (vit E form) increases skin healing and helps prevent skin breakdown. Selenomethionine (amino acid form of selenium), internally and externally, protects the skin from blistering, harmful tanning effects, skin cancer and cell damage. Studies have shown that people with a low level of selenomethionine are four times as likely to have cancer of skin, colon, lung, prostate and leukemia as those with high levels. Supplements of selenium internally and topically (called SeMet) reduce the incidence of acute and chronic damage to the skin caused by UV. SeMet (quickly absorbed through the skin) acts as a co-factor for the powerful antioxidant glutathione peroxide which absorbs free radicals. Both these substances repair DNA, make DNA more resistant to carcinogens, inhibit skin cancers and protects the skin from aging. Check your sunscreen to see if it contains SeMet.

A high quality cream to rejuvenate your skin is important. There is an ingredient from the wild yam, *Dioscorea villosa*, that helps the skin recover the soft silky quality of youth. The ingredient is a natural sterol, a saprogenic, that possesses hormonal properties. The Chinese have used *Dioscorea villosa* for thousands of years to regulate and normalize hormone production in female problems and difficulties with the spleen, kidney, liver and lungs. The use of a cream with *Dioscorea villosa* helps prevent aging, combats dry sagging skin, under eye puffiness is removed, PMS is decreased and menstruation is better regulated.

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