

THE FUTURE OF BEAUTY AND ANTI-AGING

NEW YOU

Issue 8 Spring 2012

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The New Sexesthetics

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down there*

THE PREMIER SKIN ISSUE

*Breakthrough treatments
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A close-up photograph of a woman with dark hair pulled back, looking directly at the camera. She is applying a thick, translucent, yellowish peel to her face. The peel is already partially applied to her forehead, nose, and cheeks, with some areas being actively smoothed by her hand. The lighting is bright, highlighting the texture of the peel and the woman's skin.

SMOOTH SKIN LASERS & PEELS

One of the oldest techniques in the world to remove wrinkles and discoloration is the chemical peel. This goes back to the days of Cleopatra. And while chemical peels are still used by cosmetic doctors today, lasers have largely replaced them. High-tech aside, they work in a similar fashion: They 'burn' the skin, which triggers the skin to heal. As it heals, collagen production is stimulated and a 'new skin' emerges, smoother, less wrinkled and less pigmented.

There are different kinds of lasers, but they come down to two main types: The 'ablative' lasers that wound the surface of the skin aggressively (ablative means to vaporize), and the 'non-ablative' lasers that poke a pattern of tiny holes in the skin, stimulating collagen production and skin tightening under the surface.

When it comes to getting rid of wrinkles, "Laser resurfacing and chemical peels are the gold standard," says Dr. Niamtu, and both can have lasting effects when it comes to resetting the clock. The difference is the way the skin is injured. With a chemical peel, or dermabrasion, a wound is created and when it heals there is new epidermis and no age spots. Lasers use light energy to burn the skin and force the building of new collagen.

Dr. Niamtu prefers the old CO2 laser, which vaporizes the entire skin surface. While there are risks of permanent and temporary scarring, extended redness and infection, "It's the go-to method for wrinkles," he says, because it forces the entire surface to remake itself. Other limitations include the fact that neck areas cannot be treated aggressively, and that it requires two weeks of downtime for carefully monitored healing. But these are small prices to pay for smooth skin.

The newest laser treatments are designed to get around these problems. Topping the list are the 'fractional' lasers, which send light energy in a pattern that hits only parts of the skin—sort of like touching only the red squares on a checkerboard. These lasers are gentler, leaving surrounding healthy tissue to help in the healing process. With these lasers, the neck and décolletages can be done effectively. They also require only a couple of days for recovery. The downside is that they are far less profound in their effect,

and require a series of treatments spread out over a period of months. Full results are seen only after six months.

Most doctors agree that the more aggressive the laser treatment, the better the result—but that means more discomfort, more downtime and more risks of side effects. There is also some controversy over which of the new lasers work best. "We're still looking for the holy grail of reproducible results with lasers that are not invasive and it's still not happened yet," says Dr. Schlessinger.

Either way, lasers can smooth skin texture, remove wrinkles, and make your skin look ten years younger or more. But the procedures don't come cheap; either all at once or spread out over time, the treatments will run between \$4,000 and \$6,000. But doctors point out that since the results are enduring—they last for five years or more—it's money well spent.

WHAT LASERS AND PEELS CAN DO FOR THE NEW YOU:

- Erase fine lines and wrinkles
- Smooth and tighten skin
- Improve and flatten scars
- Improve skin tone and texture
- Stimulate new collagen production
- Remove brown spots and splotchy, uneven skin color
- Improve crow's feet, smoker's lines and other deep wrinkles



Joe Niamtu, III, DMD, is a Richmond, VA, cosmetic surgeon board-certified by the American Board of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. Dr. Niamtu is a fellow of the American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery and the American Society for Lasers in Medicine and Surgery. He has 28 years' experience with facial surgery techniques to enhance the look of your face.