



ASPIRE[®]

DERMATOLOGY

Newsletter: September 2020

Healthy Aging Month

In recognition of September's designation as *Healthy Aging Month*, this edition of our monthly newsletter will focus on healthy aging for your skin. Some of the most visible changes of aging are displayed on our skin. After all, the skin is our body's largest organ and one of the clearest indicators of our overall health. As we transition to fall, now is the perfect opportunity to evaluate your skin and establish healthy habits that will maintain and protect it!



September is Healthy Aging Month



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Healthy Aging Skin Care

- 1 Use sunscreen every day.** The sun's ultraviolet rays can dramatically impact your skin and lead to multiple types of skin damage, including sunburns, pigmentation changes, wrinkles, and skin cancers. Everyone knows they should apply sunscreen when going to the beach or spending the day outdoors. On those occasions you should apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher. However, fewer people realize that our skin is subjected to the rays of the sun every day – not just when we are outside for prolonged periods of time. You can help reduce the sun's effect on your skin by making a habit of applying sunscreen to your face, ears, neck, and hands. You should do this every day, all year round. An easy way to establish this habit is to use a daily moisturizer, ideally in the morning, that contains at least a 30 SPF.
- 2 Be kind to your skin.** As we age, our skin becomes thinner and more easily dehydrated and damaged. By incorporating a gentle skin care regimen, you can protect your skin and stay ahead of problems. We recommend that you wash your face with a gentle cleanser at night and use a hydrating wash when showering. Additionally, a daily application of a moisturizing cream or lotion can go a long way to keep your skin healthy. And don't forget to use your 30+ SPF sunscreen for sun protection!
- 3 Perform regular self-exams of your skin.** To detect skin cancers early, make it a habit to examine your skin on a regular basis, ideally at least every month. Additionally, schedule regular skin checks with your provider at Aspire Dermatology, and remember to always seek medical advice for any concerning spots on your skin. When in doubt, schedule a visit. Aspire Dermatology prides itself on getting patients in quickly.
- 4 Avoid tanning beds.** Tanning beds are not safe for your skin. Studies have shown that just one session in a tanning bed can increase the risk of developing melanoma by 20%, squamous cell carcinoma by 67%, and basal cell carcinoma by 29%. Yikes! Tanning will also lead to an altered texture of your skin and increased wrinkle formation. If appearing tan is a priority, there are many self-tanners and techniques for application that can provide excellent results.
- 5 Stop smoking.** Smoking is bad for your health in numerous ways. When it comes to your skin, the chemicals in cigarette smoke contribute to premature aging, increased infections, and can decrease the skin's ability to heal. Smoking is also associated with a significantly increased risk of squamous cell skin cancer, especially of the lips and mouth.

Common Benign Skin Changes

As you start to pay closer attention to your skin, there are several benign changes you may notice as you age. Being familiar with these changes can help you tell what is normal and what requires medical attention. Keep reading below for some of the most common benign skin changes.



Cherry Angiomas - These common growths are made up of blood vessels. They appear as round, slightly elevated, ruby-red bumps on your skin. Cherry angiomas are typically small in size (ranging from 0.5 to 6 mm in diameter). While they usually develop on the torso, they can appear virtually anywhere on the body, can occur in all skin types, and can become more numerous as we age.



Seborrheic Keratoses - These growths, often called SKs or “barnacles,” are harmless lesions that tend to start developing in our 30s or 40s. SKs are most common on the torso. These growths can have a variety of presentations. They can be flat or raised, skin colored or darkly pigmented. They can have a surface that is smooth, waxy or warty and can be few or many in number. They often have a “stuck-on” or “pasted on” appearance, meaning that they don't necessarily look like they're part of the skin. Some patients choose to have them removed for cosmetic reasons or for increased comfort.



Lentigines - These lesions, also called “age spots” or “liver spots,” often appear as flat brown spots on the face, hands, arms, and shoulders. They are the result of sun damage (they don't have anything to do with your liver!) and tend to be larger than freckles. People with fair skin develop them most often, but lentigines can appear on all skin types. Using sunscreen can reduce how many lentigines you develop and may help reduce the appearance of any that you already have. This is another reason to wear daily sunscreen with 30+ SPF!





Epidermal Inclusion Cyst - This type of cyst typically develops slowly as a firm, round nodule under the skin. You may be able to see a central pore over the growth. They are more common in men and tend to arise in adulthood. Buckle up, you're not going to like this - they are typically filled with a foul-smelling, thick, cheese-like material that can be expressed if they are "popped." While they are not malignant, they may cause problems if they increase to a size that becomes uncomfortable or if they rupture under the skin, which can lead to tenderness, inflammation, and drainage. If an epidermal inclusion cyst turns bothersome, we can provide treatment to resolve the issue!



All photos sourced from DermNetNZ.org

Dermatofibromas - Dermatofibromas are another common, benign skin growth. They typically appear as a very firm bump that can be red, brown, or purple. Part of the lesion may be elevated above the skin with the remainder nestled below the surface like an iceberg. They can occur anywhere on the body, but they most frequently appear on the lower legs, the upper arms, or the upper back. Some practitioners believe that they are the skin's reaction to a minor trauma such as a cut while shaving or an insect bite. These lesions are more common in women and are usually free of symptoms. They can become easily irritated or itchy if shaved over repeatedly or if picked at.



Aspire Dermatology, Your Partner in Healthy Aging - This Month and All Year!

Providers at Aspire Dermatology are committed to detecting and treating skin cancers and benign lesions. While many of the skin changes mentioned above are benign, it can often take a trained-eye to distinguish normal changes from concerning growths. Aspire Dermatology also manages all diseases of the skin, hair, and nails and enjoys educating patients on methods to keep their skin healthy.

We're only a phone call away from helping you (401-239-1800)!

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- WARWICK OFFICE 618 Toll Gate Road, Warwick, RI 02886
- TIVERTON OFFICE 67 William S. Canning Blvd., Tiverton, RI 02878
- JOHNSTON OFFICE 1524 Atwood Avenue, Suite 321, Johnston, RI 02919
- RIVERSIDE OFFICE 1525 Wampanoag Trail, Suite 203, Riverside, RI 02915
- CUMBERLAND OFFICE 2138 Mendon Road, Suite 201, Cumberland, RI 02864 *(coming soon)*

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