

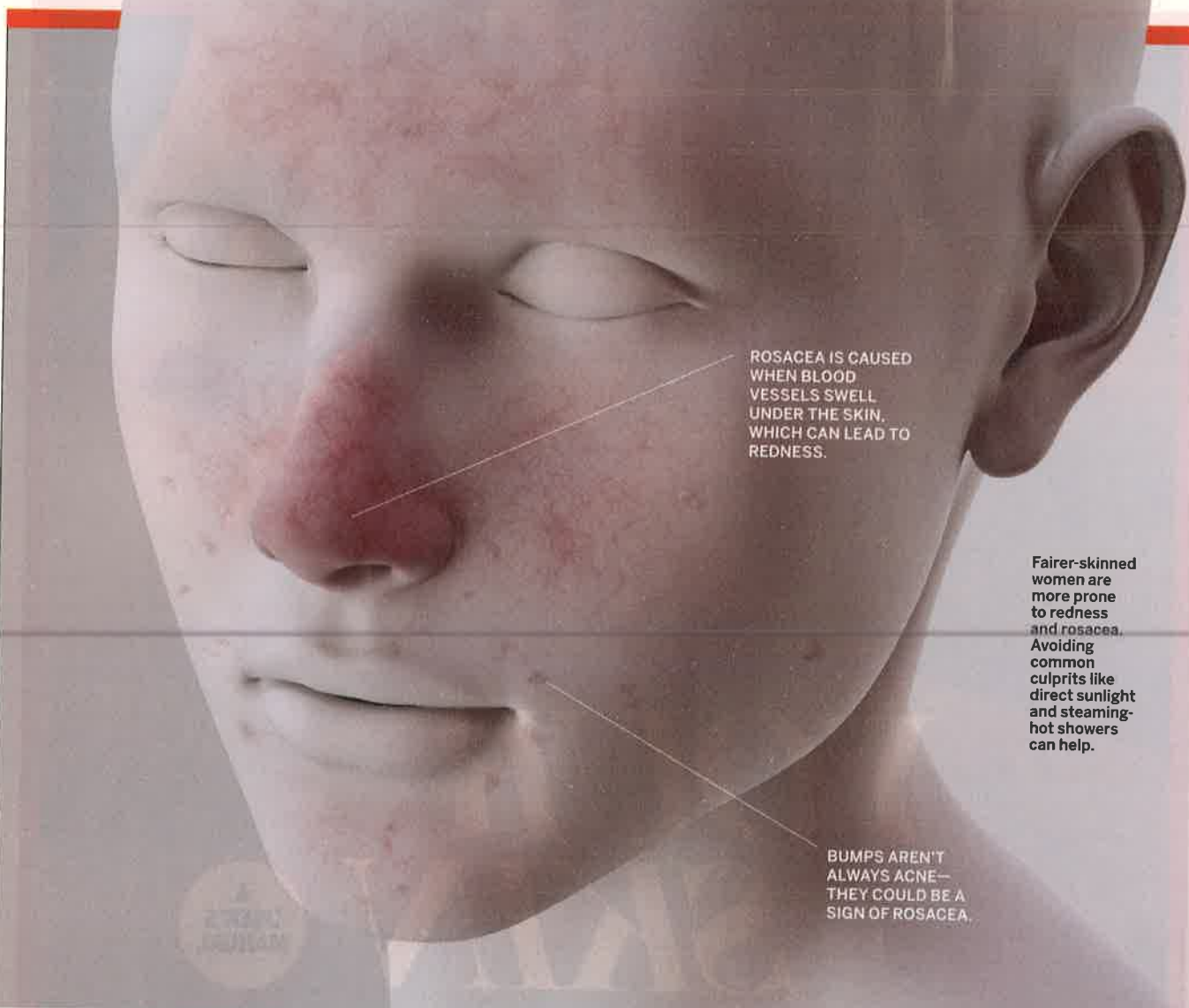
# YOUR SKIN

A  
USER'S  
MANUAL

Smoother, softer, healthier,  
younger-looking skin:  
Yes, please! We gathered  
the pros' top secrets.

By HALLIE LEVINE SKLAR

→ WHO DOESN'T OBSESS, even a little, about her skin? After all, it's our biggest organ, the one most likely to show the effects of the elements (like sun and wind) and the aging process. Of course, you can't control the weather or the hands of time. But there's plenty you *can* do to keep your skin in peak form. Read on for the latest advances—from high-tech lasers for fine lines to groundbreaking skin-cancer drugs—that'll help prevent and beat beauty bummers and medical problems alike.



ROSACEA IS CAUSED WHEN BLOOD VESSELS SWELL UNDER THE SKIN, WHICH CAN LEAD TO REDNESS.

Fairer-skinned women are prone to redness and rosacea. Avoiding common culprits like direct sunlight and steaming-hot showers can help.

BUMPS AREN'T ALWAYS ACNE—THEY COULD BE A SIGN OF ROSACEA.



## REDNESS

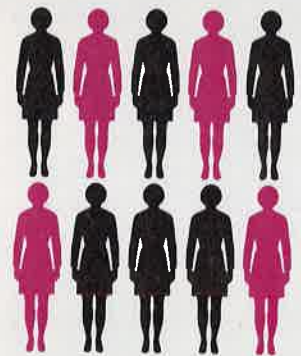
**THE LOWDOWN** Blame that perpetual flush on years of exposure to the sun's UV rays, which can cause capillaries to burst, explains Debra Jaliman, MD, professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City and author of *Skin Rules*. As you get older, your skin also thins, making blood vessels more visible. Another common culprit: rosacea, a chronic condition that involves swelling of the blood vessels under the

skin. Its redness comes and goes, usually in response to triggers like sun exposure, stress, hot weather, wind, hot baths, and spicy foods.

**WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE** Redness on the cheeks, nose, chin, or forehead. Rosacea may cause acne-like bumps.

**RX** Hide facial redness with green-tinted concealers such as Dermablend, Dr. Jaliman says. If you've got rosacea, your dermatologist can prescribe antibiotics or topical products that contain sulfur or azelaic

acid, which have anti-inflammatory properties. Wearing sunscreen is a must to prevent flare-ups. Look for ones that contain physical blockers zinc oxide or titanium dioxide, which tend to be less irritating than chemical ingredients, Dr. Jaliman says. In the meantime, you can get visible blood vessels zapped away in your derm's office with a laser. Most people require two to three treatments at about \$300 a pop.



*40% of people with rosacea have a relative with the condition.*



# WHY IS MY FACE DOING THAT?!

## “I’ve got zits!”

► More than a quarter of women in their 40s break out, one study shows. In fact, pregnancy and perimenopause can cause acne, due to shifting hormone levels that lead to blocked hair follicles under the skin. To clear things up, use drugstore products labeled oil-free and non-comedogenic—they won’t clog pores—

and benzoyl peroxide or salicylic acid for occasional pimples. If you’re plagued, a dermatologist can put you on prescription retinol.

## “Dark blotches have popped up on my cheeks!”

► That’s melasma—grayish-brown patches caused by your color-making cells (melanocytes) going into overdrive. UV rays

can trigger melasma, so wear sunscreen; prescription bleaching creams and laser treatments can fade it.

## “There are red, scaly patches on my knees and elbows!”

► Sounds like psoriasis, an autoimmune skin disease that speeds up cell growth, says Jason Rechenberg, MD, director of

the department of dermatology at the University of Texas Southwestern in Austin. Most cases can be treated with prescription topical steroids, which reduce inflammation, or with topical vitamin D, which helps slow cell growth. More severe cases may be treated with light therapy or prescription drugs such as etanercept.



## SUN DAMAGE AND LINES

**THE LOWDOWN** “As you get older, your body slows its production of collagen and elastin,” says Jessica Krant, MD, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in New York City. That reduces your skin’s elasticity. The result?

That occasional forehead furrow, frown, or eye squint becomes permanently etched on your face. As for age spots, thank all those days you spent as a teen sunning yourself sans sunscreen: Exposure to UV rays over time causes an increase in the number of pigment-producing cells in your skin, Dr. Krant says.

**WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE** Fine lines; flat brown or black spots on sun-exposed areas such as your face, chest, and hands.

**RX Age spots** Drugstore bleaching creams—which contain 2 percent hydroquinone or a natural ingredient called kojic acid—can help. But if you have a lot of damage, you’ll probably need something stronger. Your dermatologist can prescribe 4 percent hydroquinone, but talk to her about risks—it’s banned in Europe for safety concerns. Your dermatologist may also prescribe lightening ingredients like tretinoin

and hydrocortisone. If those don’t work, consider laser or intense pulse light sessions, which cost \$300 to \$500 each time.

**Fine lines** Products that contain retinol build up collagen, helping to smooth wrinkles. OTC ones are good for fine lines and crows’ feet, Dr. Krant says; ask your doc for a Retin-A prescription if you need more power. Botox or Dysport injections prevent forehead wrinkles. Cost: \$500 to \$750.

GETTY IMAGES



FINE LINES

**90** The percentage of aging signs, like discoloration and wrinkles, that are due to sun exposure, says NYC dermatologist Robert Guida, MD. Keep slathering on that SPF!

ECZEMA



PROBLEM  
No. 3

## ALLERGIC AND IRRITATED SKIN

**THE LOWDOWN** If you've got a rash that's marked by dry, cracked red patches, you probably have contact dermatitis. Either you've touched a substance you're allergic to, like nickel or latex, or you have a nonallergic reaction to chemicals like those in detergents.

You might also have eczema, which is usually triggered by irritants from fragrances, cold weather, allergens, or sometimes even stress. Eczema tends to be itchier and sometimes leads to small bumps that leak fluid.

If you have itchy welts that move around over the course of the day, you've got hives. Acute hives that come on suddenly are often due to a food or medication allergy. Chronic hives, which can last up to six weeks, are more common and not always allergic. About 20 percent of the

time, they're triggered by cold, heat, light, or exercise. Otherwise, they may be caused by an autoimmune disorder or your body's reaction to an illness. In some cases, there's no clear cause.

**RX** If you notice sudden hives, take a Benadryl and call your doc ASAP; you might be having a serious allergic reaction. Contact dermatitis usually goes away when you avoid whatever's triggering it. Over-the-counter antihistamines, such as Zyrtec, and hydrocortisone creams can also help, but if the rash continues, see a dermatologist. Prescription cortisone creams can ease eczema and chronic hives; severe cases of chronic hives can be treated with prescription drugs, like ciclosporin, which help suppress the immune system.

## MOLES: WHEN TO WORRY (AND NOT)

There are three types of skin cancer: basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, and melanoma, which accounts for the fewest cases, but causes the most deaths. But two drugs recently approved by the FDA—Zelboraf and Yervoy—offer new hope to people with late-stage melanoma. "Up to now, there haven't been any truly effective treatments," says Beth McLellan, MD, a dermatologist at NYU Langone Medical Center. Still, the best way to defeat melanoma, she says, is to catch it early. Get a yearly body check from your dermatologist, and see her if a spot matches these ABCDEs that indicate melanoma, or signs of a non-melanoma cancer:

### ASYMMETRY

(1) If you draw a line through a melanoma, the sides don't match.

**BORDERS** (2) They tend to be irregular.

### COLOR

(3) Multiple hues are a warning sign—even different shades of brown or black.

### DIAMETER

(4) Melanomas are usually at least 6 mm (the size of a pencil eraser), although they can be smaller.

### EVOLVING

(5) Any change in a mole—in size, shape, color, height, or new symptoms such as bleeding, itching, or crusting—could signal a problem.

### WHAT BASAL CELL CARCINOMA (6) AND SQUAMOUS CELL CARCINOMA (7)

look like: an open sore; a shiny bump or nodule; or a crusty, pink, wart-like growth.



## THE STARS' SKIN



Cameron Diaz is reported to be a rosacea sufferer.

Kim Kardashian aired her psoriasis diagnosis on her reality show last year.

**WINTER-  
PROOF  
YOURSELF!**

It's that time of year again—hello, windburned cheeks and raw, cracked hands. Tips from Chicago dermatologist Carolyn Jacob, MD, to keep your skin velvety-soft:

**Skip the super-hot shower.**

► Tempting as it is, hot water strips your skin of natural oils.

**Protect your paws.**

► Don't forget to wear gloves, not just for warmth, but to keep hands hydrated and soft. And pull a scarf over the bottom of your face to avoid chapping.

**Exfoliate to slough off rough, dead skin.**

► Retinol products like Retin-A are great for your face (unless it's raw or windburned, in which case they could be irritating). Try moisturizing your body at night with a cream (such as AmLactin Moisturizing Body Lotion) that contains lactic acid, salicylic acid, or alpha-hydroxy acid.

*Soft-skin secret: Moisturize as soon as you get out of the shower. Your skin is still damp, which means lotion can lock more oils into it.*

**IS JUST LIKE OURS**

Salma Hayek recently revealed that severe acne in her 20s sent her into a depression.

Michelle Monaghan told Health about a mole—spotted by her spouse—that turned out to be cancerous.

**DERMS' FAVE FACE SAVERS**



**1. CLEANSER**

"I recommend a non-soap gentle cleanser with ceramides," says Jill Weinstein, MD, a dermatologist at Northwestern Memorial Physicians Group in Chicago. Try CeraVe Hydrating Cleanser.

**2. SERUM**

Look for ones with vitamin C, like SkinCeuticals C E Ferulic, says Arielle N. B. Kauvar, MD, director of New York Laser & Skin Care.

**3. MOISTURIZER**

Try Olay Complete All Day Moisturizer

With Sunscreen Broad Spectrum.

**4. NIGHT CREAM**

with retinol, like Neutrogena Rapid Wrinkle Repair Serum.

**5. EYE CREAM**

Dr. Jaliman's vote: 100% Pure Caffeine Eye Cream.

## 5 FOODS FOR GREAT SKIN

There's no magic pill you can take to Dorian Gray yourself, but there are foods you can eat to help keep your skin soft, smooth, and cancer-free:



### Salmon

is filled with **omega-3 fatty acids**, which protect skin's collagen from damaging UV rays, studies show.

### Hot chocolate

A recent study found that women who drank cocoa every day were less prone to sunburn and had smoother skin than women who didn't indulge.

### Sweet potatoes

They're packed with **vitamin A**, which may reduce your melanoma risk, according to a 2012 study in the *Journal of Investigative Dermatology*.

### Leafy greens

pack a UV-fighter called **lutein**, says Elizabeth J. Johnson, PhD, of the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University.

### Tomato sauce

One study found that people who consumed the equivalent of 5 tablespoons of tomato paste a day had 33 percent more protection against sunburn.

## The Truth About 2 Top Beauty Bummers



### CELLULITE

Alas, very few things touted to banish cellulite really do. There is a laser, *VelaShape*, that's been cleared by the FDA to reduce cellulite in your thighs (at a cost of about \$300 to \$600); effects last only one to six months. "Doing strength training and cardio to gain muscle and lose fat can improve its appearance, but won't completely resolve it," says Dr. Weinstein.

### STRETCH MARKS

Cocoa butter won't work on them (sorry, Grandma). The most effective treatment is to catch them while they're still red and zap them away with a laser (at about \$400 a session).



## GROWTHS

**THE LOWDOWN** Take a deep breath: Not all lumps and bumps are cancerous. The most common are seborrheic keratoses (SKs)—harmless brown or black growths that tend to crop up with age and can run in families. Other non-problematic growths include warts and skin tags. Warts are caused by the human papillomavirus

(HPV), and they're contagious but not life-threatening. You're more likely to catch one if you have a cut, which explains why they tend to appear on your fingers. Skin tags often show up on armpits, due to chafing. For the same reason, you may get them if you're overweight or have large breasts.

**WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE** SKs start as small, flat, rough, tan or brown bumps that slowly thicken on your face, chest, shoulders, or back. Warts are small, grainy growths that feel rough and bumpy. Skin tags stick out and may have a little stalk connecting to your body.

**RX** These growths are harmless, but you can opt to have your dermatologist

remove them, either through freezing them with liquid nitrogen (cryosurgery), burning them off (electrocautery), or, if they're large, zapping them with a laser. Always get them checked out, though, since sometimes it's hard to tell whether a growth's benign or potentially cancerous.



## Skin 911

Do you need to head to the ER, stat—or can you wait it out?

**STAY!** Most cuts can be treated at home. Hold under cool running water;

use soap and a washcloth to clean the area. Leave uncovered unless it could get rubbed or dirty.

**GO!** Your cut is still bleeding after 20 minutes of pressure.

**STAY!** You have a red and painful or blistering burn that's

less than 2 or 3 inches in diameter. Hold it under cool running water for up to 15 minutes, apply antibiotic ointment, and wrap it in gauze. **GO!** You've got a burn that's larger than 3 inches, or white or charred skin that doesn't hurt.