

COAST

REFLECTING SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S FINER LIFESTYLE | FEBRUARY 2001

Bizz Buzz

by Amanda Anderson

DONNA WEST

DERMATOLOGY

When it comes to skin care, the simpler, the better," says Dr. Donna West of Donna West Dermatology (949-219-0777). "We don't want to put four or five things on our face every night, and we don't have to."

What refreshing news in this day and age, when thousands of skin care products can be found everywhere from the drugstore to the cosmetic counter to the day spa. The range of choices for skin care alone is enough reason for men, women, children and teens with any kind of skin problem to see a licensed dermatologist, in order to sort through the trend and hype with an expert on skin,



the body's largest organ. In addition to being able to sagely recommend over-the-counter products, Dr. West is, of course, able to prescribe stronger topical remedies to prevent acne and reduce the risk of scarring, for example. She also provides services that one might find at a day spa, like laser resurfacing, chemical peels and microdermabrasion, but, unlike at a spa, follow-up treatments and monitoring are done in a



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more scientific way by a doctor, who, in addition to her medical degree has a degree in chemistry.

But there are even more important reasons to see a dermatologist than cosmetic improvements.

"I am very much into skin cancer prevention," Dr. West says. As well as having positive cosmetic effects, treatments like peels and microdermabrasion can help to prevent some types of skin cancer, she says "Though we have nothing in the literature of dermatology that says topical peels prevent skin cancer, in my experience, we don't need to cut out skin cancers with as much frequency when people have had these treatments." Part of the reason for this, she says, is that, when the top layer of the skin is removed, new migrating cells are

exposed to ultraviolet rays for less time.

Dr. West is also a devout advocate of wearing sunblock every day, specifically one that blocks both UVB and UVA rays. UVA rays actually come through the windows of your car, home and office. She believes that anyone with a tendency to have a lot of moles should have their skin checked by a dermatologist at least once every year; and she has a policy of removing any moles that look suspicious, even on small children.

But the best prevention of all is to stay out of the sun and the tanning salon. Though it's a message that's hard to swallow in Southern California, "I try to teach people that untanned skin is beautiful," she says. "If everyone took my advice, I'd practically put myself out of business."