

Reversing aging skin

G.P.R. James wrote in 1829, "Age is the most terrible misfortune that can happen to any man. Other evils will mend, but this is every day getting worse." Why he left out women I have no idea.

Today, one could utter the same lament. After all, who wants to get old? But although we still haven't found the secret for eternal youth, it is now possible to remove some of the wrinkles of aging. Today "cosmeceuticals" are available to help restore aging skin.

Baby boomers are lining up for plastic surgery, a radical way to treat aging. Others, even young women, are flocking to get Botox injections. But injecting Botox every few months to temporarily smooth out wrinkles is to me the height of folly. The use of cosmeceuticals makes more sense.

Today's cosmeceuticals are a far cry from grandmother's cold cream. Besides, scientific evidence backs up their claims.

The way the skin ages depends on several factors. We can't control Canada's frigid temperatures that are unkind to skin. Nor can we choose our parents. On the other hand, we can stop smoking, a habit that makes people look older than their years.

But the most controllable factor of all is "photo-aging." Too much exposure to sun results in coarse, pebbly and rough skin. Excess exposure also causes irregular pigmentation and wrinkles due to ultraviolet A and B radiation.

Today, the message is "Stay out of the sun." But I continue to see young and old ignoring this warning. If they're lucky their skin will only become thin, almost transparent and less elastic.

If they're unlucky, and more and more people are, their heavily sun-tanned skin will develop a malignant melanoma. This is a huge price to pay for sunworship and the fashionable bronzed look.

Yet, suppose you've been prudent about sun exposure. And like G.P.R. James you regret seeing your youthful appearance gradually fading away. So you've decided to fight the wrinkled, blotched skin and dull complexion.

Only 13 per cent of the female population are willing to submit to a major chemical peeling procedure. This requires specialized care and can cause complications. Others prefer to play it safe by using a facial cream, such as Reversa, which contains glycolic acid, Matrixy, an anti-wrinkle micro-collagen, vitamins and soy extracts. It also protects against ultraviolet radiation.

Glycolic acid, the most effective of the fruit acids, is the main ingredient of Reversa. It's derived from sugar cane and easily penetrates skin.

Reversa helps to rejuvenate aging skin by shedding its outer layer. But it also triggers the skin's ability to regenerate collagen and elastin. And by the addition of vitamin C to Reversa the skin generates additional collagen.

Linus Pauling, a two-time Nobel Prize winner, stressed for years the vital importance of collagen. It's a significant component of skin and every cell in the body. Like mortar that holds bricks together, collagen is the cement that binds cells together. So as we age and as collagen decreases its small wonder that wrinkles appear.

How effective is Reversa and how long does it take to get results? In some cases results are noted within hours and long-term benefits within less than 12 weeks.

I'm indebted to my wife for some of this research. She has used Reversa and says it's easy to use and likes the results. And what male would be foolish enough to say she's wrong. In fact, she's even suggested that I might benefit. Possibly a message to what age has done to me over the years?

In fact, if any of us want to see the effects of sun damage, Dr. Sheldon Pinnell, professor emeritus at Duke University Medical Center in Durham, N.C., has a unique way of gauging it.

He says, "The difference between skin that's photo-aged and skin that's just plain aged is the difference between the skin on the face and hands and the skin on the buttocks."

Unfortunately, all this is too late for G.P.R. James. But maybe the rest of us should consider this difference and do a little reversing with Reversa. Happy gymnastics while you do the comparison.