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Personalization is Key to Solving Skincare Concerns by David May, CEO/Founder of PRESCRIBEDsolutions



When someone finds out that I work in the skin care industry, I'm frequently asked for advice. It comes with the territory. Usually, my first inclination is to recommend a specific procedure or product, based on their query. Typically, that recommendation consists of citing products or procedures that have shown significant, tangible results and have been adopted by the opinion leaders in fields of dermatology and plastic surgery. Some are new procedures like contour threading (in lieu of facial surgery) while others like the use of retinol in anti-aging have been a gold standard for many years. But one thing I inevitably recommend is a consultation with a dermatologist.

After many years in the skin care/cosmeceuticals industry, I also tend to ask more questions than is typical. Sometimes a person at an event or party may get much more than they bargained for when they hear questions from me such as: What are your skincare concerns? How frequently do you use a sunscreen? What type of sunscreen do you use? How often do you re-apply it? How frequently do you visit a dermatologist? Can you describe your regular eating habits? Does that diet include vitamin supplements and antioxidants?

Many ask, "What does that have to do with the fine wrinkles around my eyes?"

Like our hair and our palates, we are all different. For example, three women may complain of inflammation on their face. The causes of their inflammation, however, may vary. One may have just had photodynamic therapy (PDT) and naturally, there would be some inflammation. But the second may have inflammation due to acne and the third may have inflammation due to rosacea. If a woman with inflammation due to rosacea uses a product containing salicylic acid (which does address acne conditions), the ingredient may be very detrimental to the person's skin.

We forget that the skin is the body's largest organ. It's too important to trifle with self-medicating. As with other medical conditions, a person should make a trip to his or her physician to evaluate what clinical options are available and whether they include a type of product specific to their skincare needs. As consumers, we are bombarded with skin products that make claims, some of which may be harmful to the patient's skin care needs or do the opposite of what we're trying to treat. It's easy to read advertising copy and believe we have found a simple solution to our own skin care concerns. It's hard to find the exact answer for our specific needs.

Today, DNA, genetics and family history may dictate what a doctor recommends for a variety of ills, from diabetes to cancer. Like many other conditions and disease states, there are any number of treatments, some of which are highly specialized and require a medical doctor's expertise to treat and manage. Similarly, there are now customized solutions for patients with skincare concerns. Whether the product is for cleansing, hydration or anti-oxidant protection a person may have additional skincare issues such as acne, fine lines and wrinkles or even rosacea, where "boosting" these base products with condition specific additives can target these concerns with high performance additives of vitamins, as well as natural and bio-engineered ingredients. This permits the product's efficacy to be specific to each patient's needs and concerns.

This customization concept will no doubt push forward to greater degrees in all phases of clinical care as peer-reviewed academic studies delve into both the similarities and distinctions of people in their environmental surroundings and health histories. This concept of "customized care" will provide physicians with the ability to recommend treatment protocols specific to the individual's needs. For any person, who is truly interested in the answer to the often-posed cocktail party question, "What should I be using for my skin?" the best answer is an appointment with a dermatologist.

About the Author of the article: David May is the CEO/Founder of PRESCRIBEDsolutions. May is the former Senior Vice President of Marketing at the Lancaster Group. May was also the Vice President, General Manager of Aramis International, a division of Est•e Lauder for more than 10 years where he was responsible for sales and marketing, in 25 countries. May is also a former Associate Publisher for both *The New Yorker* and *Town & Country*.



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