



Completing the Vision

Cosmetic practitioners want their patients to achieve the best possible results. Just as you lay the groundwork for success by thoroughly evaluating and educating each patient, you can make a substantial difference in the outcome by prescribing post-procedure skincare regimens that help to speed healing and optimize results.

BY DARCY LEWIS

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LaRoche-Posay Biomedic C-Recovery soothes and diffuses redness while strengthening the skin's barrier function with 1% Thermal Dermobiotic and 5% pure vitamin C. 888.577.5226, www.laroche-posay.us



The six-product Dermaquest Post Skin Resurfacing Kit includes a full line of anti-inflammatory, moisturizing and SPF 30 products to speed healing while hydrating skin and reducing the risk of pigmentation problems. 800.213.8100, www.dermaquestinc.com.



EltaMD Laser Post Procedure Balm can be used immediately following laser and dermabrasion services to prevent drying and protect damaged skin. 800.633.8872, www.elta.net.

Histogen Aesthetics ReGenica Rejuvenation System, featuring Facial Rejuvenation Complex, Advanced Rejuvenation Day Repair and Advanced Rejuvenation Overnight Repair, helps restore skin moisture and promote healing following laser, chemical and dermabrasion procedures. 858.200.9520, www.histogenaesthetics.com.



"The more invasive the procedure, the more important posttreatment care can be, no question, especially with ablative procedures," says George AnterAsian, MD, a head and neck surgeon specializing in laser procedures at the Santa Monica Laser and Skin Care Center in Santa Monica, California. Putting patients on appropriate topicals following treatment speeds healing and assists in collagen remodeling, both of which are crucial for optimal results. Patients who follow the regimens you prescribe, recommend or dispense are also more likely to take their follow-up visits seriously. In turn, you'll have paved the way for a continuing relationship with that patient.

"It makes no sense for a patient to spend \$1,000 to \$1,500 on a Fraxel treatment and then go home and use noncorrective skin care to try and maintain results," says Michelle O'Laughlin, an esthetician in northwest Indiana and owner of Chesterton, Indiana-based DeLaine by Michelle Douglas, a physician-exclusive skincare line. "If you don't provide your patients with a good alternative, you're missing the boat. When you provide products, you know your patients are using what they need to get the best results."

Wound Healing Wonders

Richard Fitzpatrick, MD, director of cosmetic dermatology at the La Jolla Cosmetic Surgery Centre in La Jolla, California, points out that wound healing occurs in two phases. "First you have the acute wound healing phase, which occurs in the first week to two weeks," he says. "During this time, you're trying to restore the natural architecture and function of the skin."

Dr. Fitzpatrick, who also founded the SkinMedica product line, is a proponent of taking a simple approach during the acute phase, particularly after more aggressive procedures. "We want the patient to soak her skin with water and white vinegar every two hours to debride the wound and discourage bacteria. She also needs to use an ointment to keep the skin moist," he says. "In the past, we recommended petrolatum-based products but have found that many patients experience allergic reactions." As a result, Dr. Fitzpatrick formulated a vegetable-based ointment for his own line. "It makes the product lighter, less occlusive and less prone to triggering allergic reactions," he says.

Allergy concerns have also led Dr. Fitzpatrick to avoid the use of topical antibiotics during the acute healing phase following ablative procedures. "I prefer to prescribe oral antibiotics prophylactically," he says. "When skin is broken, the risk of causing contact dermatitis or allergic reactions with topical antibiotics is 20%, 10 times higher than when topical antibiotics are used on intact skin."

Dr. AnterAsian takes a similar approach. "I'm personally cautious because the permeability of the skin following an ablative procedure is significantly enhanced, so the less you put on the skin the better," he says. "We see patients every day if possible that first week for two reasons: It allows us to watch their healing closely, and I like to use the Omnilux LED light treatment

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Formulated to help rejuvenate and protect postprocedure skin, Kinerase Procedure Recovery SPF 30 offers hydrating and anti-inflammatory ingredients plus the lines proprietary Kinetin and Zeatin to reduce fine lines and wrinkles. 800.321.4576, www.kinerase.com.



Developed to address postprocedure inflammation, redness and sensitivity, the three-product Ave ne S.O.S. Post-Laser Recovery Kit includes soothing Thermal Spring Water, Thermal Spring Gel and Cicalfate skin recovery cream. 866.412.8363, www.aveusa.com.

Clinicians Complex Post Laser Ointment provides a semi-occlusive protective barrier for skin following laser resurfacing and chemical peels. The emollient formulation includes antibacterial and antioxidant ingredients. 800.826.4480, www.physicianscomplex.com



Medicalia Post-Operative Silico-Lipid Serum features silicones; vitamin A, E and F phospholipids; and Bois oil encapsulated in a spherulites delivery system to protect, soothe and cool skin. 866.314.1975, www.medicalia.com.



Control Tactics gel from Prescribed Solutions contains neurocosmetic peptides and botanical extracts to reduce the skin's inflammatory response prior to and following ablative procedures. 888.868.0104, www.prescribedsolutions.com.

system since some data suggest more rapid healing if LED is used in the early phases of wound healing," he says. "After three to four days, I have patients wash with vinegar water and follow that with a relatively bland moisturizer like Aveeno, Cetaphil or DCL Facial Hydrating Cream three to four times per day."

"During the acute phase, applying an occlusive topical right away offers the best results," says Carl Thornfeldt, MD, a dermatologist with CT Derm in Fruitland, Idaho, and founder of Episciences. "It protects the skin from pollutants and infection, and seals the skin so angiogenesis can take place." Petrolatum has been the top choice for occlusive ointments over the past 25 years, but new product ingredients not only protect but also speed repair of the skin's natural barrier for faster healing with fewer complications. "Certain plant extracts like safflower oil, avocado oil, date, flax and meadowfoam contain metabolites that help to restore the natural ratio of cholesterol, ceramides and free fatty acids in the skin barrier," says Dr. Thornfeldt. "Depending on how ablative the treatment is, the acute healing phase can last from two days up to 14 days with full CO₂ resurfacing."

As healing progresses, Dr. AnterAsian recommends that his patients use moisturizers from the SkinCeuticals line. "I like their Epidermal Repair and also their B5 Hydrating Gel, though most patients don't need both," he says.

Many physicians also view sunscreen as an important post-treatment topical. "As dermatologists, we have to mention sunscreen to everyone we talk to, especially our postprocedure patients," says Michael Gold, MD, medical director of Gold Skin Care Center in Nashville. "It's easy to assume that patients will know to use sunscreen, but I don't think we should leave it to chance."

Postprocedure patients might need specific reminders about sunscreen, too, says Dr. AnterAsian. "When patients start using sunscreen after one week with an ablative laser procedure, I want it to be a barrier block, not a chemical block," he says. "I remind them to look for a zinc oxide or titanium dioxide block and I want them to use a product with a minimum SPF 30."

Doctor Recommended

Once healing is more advanced or following less invasive procedures, collagen stimulation becomes the goal of post procedure topicals.

O'Laughlin and DeLaine created the Perfect Hydration Moisturizer with hyaluronic acid to address this specific need of post-procedure patients. "This formulation increases the skin's hydration level and plumps up fine lines and wrinkles. It can be applied following chemical peels and laser procedures," she says. "It helps to reduce redness and extreme dryness. Plus, the hyaluronic acid refines skin texture and provides continual moisture."

Bruce Freedman, MD, medical director of Plastic Surgery Associates of Northern Virginia in McLean, Virginia, agrees that hyaluronic acid is helpful. "I like the way hyaluronic acid increases hydration and helps with the 'slip factor,' which promotes

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IntelliShade SPF 45 from Revision Skincare offers UVA and UVB protection plus green tea to soothe and a tinted hue to reduce the appearance of redness. 800.385.6652, www.revisionskincare.com.



Beta glucan and centella asiatica provide barrier protection for traumatized skin in SkinCeuticals Epidermal Repair. The nonocclusive formulation also offers anti-irritants to calm skin. 800.771.9489, www.skinceuticals.com.



The five-product SAIAN Resurface Rx Kit includes Botanical Lipid Cleanser, A&E Vita-Balm, 100% Hyaluronic Acid, 100% Squalane and Protective Silicone Mist. 800.291.1130, www.saijan.net.



Patented NouriCel-MD and Ceramide technology in TNS Ceramide Treatment Cream from SkinMedica work to promote healing while soothing and hydrating postprocedure skin. 877.944.1412, www.skinmedica.com

healing," he says. He typically offers his patients multiple choices from the Topix and La Roche-Posay skincare lines. "They're both high-quality, affordable and well-tolerated by most patients," he says.

Lines developed specifically with postprocedure skincare in mind feature a variety of ingredients believed to aid in wound healing and, following the acute recovery phase, to help prolong the results of resurfacing procedures. La Roche-Posay, for example, offers three products developed for postprocedure care. "Cicaplast was formulated for use on cells that have re-epithelialized. It's a triple-action product that assists wound healing by protecting and repairing skin; it also offers antibacterial protection," says Jill Sprengel, RN, assistant vice president of education, LaRoche-Posay. "Its key ingredients are madecassoside to hasten wound healing, minerals like manganese and zinc to create keratolytic proliferation, and silicone, which acts as a protectant."

Ingredients including Thermal Dermobiotic, which supports the skin's defenses; vitamin C for collagen stimulation; vasoconstrictor xanthine; and hydrating glycerin are included in the company's C-Recovery "to prolong anti-wrinkle correction effects from aesthetic procedures, so that new tissue is protected and collagen fiber synthesis activation is maintained," says Sprengel.

Dr. Freedman is particularly passionate about antioxidants for postprocedure care. He is publishing two peer-reviewed articles this year demonstrating that topical polyphenolic antioxidants reverse facial photoaging and also reduce the adverse effects of intense pulsed light therapy. "When you use vitamins C and E, you get improved wound healing since they scavenge free radicals and stimulate the collagen processing enzymes," he says. "And our research is showing they can also thicken the dermis."

In one study, Dr. Freedman examined whether the pneumatic topical application of a polyphenolic antioxidant serum enhanced the effectiveness of microdermabrasion treatments. "Microdermabrasion had become somewhat passé, but when you add topical antioxidant serum immediately afterwards, all of the results are better."

Dr. Freedman has seen such positive results with topical antioxidants that he also has patients use them before their procedures. "We like to pretreat with the antioxidants a week beforehand so they're on board when we insult the skin," he says. "I want to have a level of antioxidants in the tissue to protect and complement wound healing."

Down to Business

While there's widespread agreement that the right topicals can make a huge impact on postprocedure results, not all practices handle this issue in the same way. Some practices build the cost of posttreatment products into the patient's initial fee. "In our practice, postprocedure products are not optional," says O'Laughlin. "We include them in the cost of the procedure and stress to patients how important postprocedure care is during the consultation."

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Episciences Epionce Skin Barrier Repair Kit features a variety of botanicals to speed the healing process and restore proper barrier function while hydrating and protecting postprocedure skin. 866.374.6623, www.epionce.com.

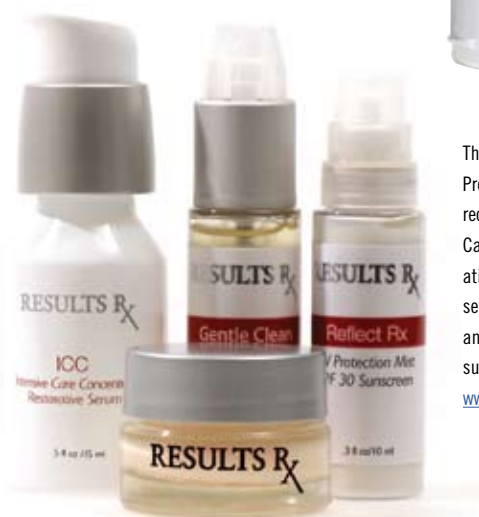


Perfect Hydration Moisturizer from DeLaine by Michelle Douglas utilizes hyaluronic acid and amino acids to hydrate skin and reduce postprocedure redness and dryness. 888.632.8222, www.michelledouglas.com.

Post-Peel Quick Recovery from Dermatologic Cosmetic Laboratories offers willowherb extract, chamomile-derived bisabolol and concentrated aloe to reduce inflammation and redness. Hyaluronic acid, vitamin E and shea butters support cellular strength and moisturize. 800.552.5060, www.dclskincare.com.



The Results Rx Recovery Program offers Rescue Rx recovery balm, Intensive Care Concentrate restorative serum, Gentle Clean sensitive skin cleanser and Reflect Rx SPF 30 mist sunscreen. 877.367.7975, www.resultsrx.com.



Dr. Fitzpatrick also includes the cost of topicals in his treatment fees, but only for procedures that cover large areas. "For large procedures, we provide one month of topicals as part of the fee because they're an integral part of the procedure," he says. "But I do recommend using the products for three to six months following the procedure, so after the first month, the patient does need to buy refills separately."

Others feel that offering patients the freedom to purchase products through a different line or supplier provides the best customer service. Accordingly, they charge separately for any products provided posttreatment. "I don't roll products into my pricing and I try to minimize packages," says Dr. Freedman. "What if someone doesn't like a particular product in a package or reacts badly to it? Then my staff will have to swap it out for another product and do those calculations. And sometimes I change my mind [about the best product for the patient] during the treatment so handling that transaction separately is easier from a business perspective."

"I don't want any sales pressure put on our patients," says Bruce Katz, MD, director of the Juva Skin & Laser Center & MediSpa, and clinical professor at the Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York, who trains his estheticians to recommend postprocedure skincare products in his practice. "I think the best approach is to be neutral. We always provide our patients with the best ingredients and the names of some equivalent products so they can purchase them elsewhere if they choose. But many patients prefer to purchase the products from us so they don't have to leave the house right after the procedure when they're red and swollen."

In many practices, estheticians are responsible for making product recommendations following noninvasive procedures. "My staff knows my preferences in terms of ingredients and products, and I rely on them to make the final recommendations to the patient. I'm part of the decision, but they're the ones who actually convey that information to the patient," says Dr. Gold. "I'm comfortable with the procedure, and they're comfortable with selling. It takes me out of the sales loop, which makes it easier for patients to say no if they choose. I carefully select products from very good companies, but if a patient prefers to get her skincare products somewhere else, I don't mind."

Business practices aside, patients want and need appropriate posttreatment topicals to maximize their investment. "Patients understand very readily that this is a critical part of the whole program and they're very receptive to that concept," says Dr. Fitzpatrick. "When I explain how collagen formation occurs and that the regimen we put them on will enhance the whole process, patients will comply in order to get better results." ■

Darcy Lewis is an award-winning Chicago journalist specializing in healthcare and business topics.