

THE SKINNY

FALL 2007

OMNILUX
LIGHT THERAPY

CELEBRATION
10TH ANNIVERSARY
OPEN HOUSE

DERMAL FILLERS
FILLING YOU IN

INTRODUCING
JANIE UMANZOR

ACNE 101
A PRIMER ON ACNE
AND ITS CAUSES

PLUS WHAT'S NEW,
PRODUCT SPECIALS,
EVENTS AND MORE



WHAT'S NEW



Fall has arrived. Our daughters are both back in school, my husband's in the mountains, and I'm in San Diego attending the investigator's meeting for one of our upcoming clinical trials. I love the fall with all the new beginnings it brings and the anticipation of things to come – for all of us the holidays – and for Suzanne Bruce and Associates (SBA) our annual Open House Celebration.

This year's event on Saturday, October 20, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon will be a true celebration of our first ten years in business. This is always a much anticipated, fun event where presenting the latest advances in medical and cosmetic skin care is the focus. It's the perfect opportunity for you and your friends to meet and learn from knowledgeable representatives from SBA and the skin-care and medical aesthetics industries. All three centers will be open, featuring presentations on subjects ranging from innovative new teen and adult acne therapies to the latest in wrinkle reduction and skin rejuvenation. So, come help us mark ten beautiful years and find out how to keep your skin looking its best. Get all the details on the insert and RSVP early.

Treating acne has always been a main staple of our practice. Over the past few years, there have been a variety of innovative new technologies and products introduced that give our patients more choices in how to treat this aggravating and often stress-producing skin condition. In this issue of *The Skinny*, we provide a primer on acne and its causes and recap for you the natural, traditional and newer treatments, including our latest, Omnilux™. You can also visit our Center for Skin Research (CSR) website accessible through www.sba-skincare.com for our acne trials currently enrolling volunteers.

As mentioned before, we've seen an explosion this year in the number of offerings of dermal fillers, most often used to reduce the appearance of wrinkles or acne scars on the face and to enhance the appearance of the lips. Through our CSR side, we just recently completed the

Juvéderm Experience Trial, a nine-month injection and observation study of previous Restylane® patients. We also treated some of our first permanent filler clients. So, in this issue, we give you our insights on the various fillers and where we recommend each be used.

I mentioned new beginnings in my introduction, and we are pleased to announce two: our Saturday morning fee-for-service medical dermatology clinic and our newest Patient Care Coordinator, Janie Umanzor. Before I get to the exciting news about Janie, we decided to begin offering Saturday medical appointments initially two Saturdays each month. Now you can come in and get your skin cancer check up or seek treatment for acne, eczema, rashes, rosacea and other skin concerns on a day that's more convenient for you. Saturday medical clinic hours run from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon. See the Calendar on the insert for upcoming dates.

As we celebrate our tenth anniversary, it's fitting that we present an interview with our newest Patient Care Coordinator, Janie Umanzor. Janie has been with SBA since we opened in May 1997. A front office specialist for more than nine years, Janie recently switched to helping our patients get answers before, during and after treatment on the cosmetic side of our practice. She has over a decade of knowledge about both our medical and cosmetic dermatology offerings and about SBA in general. Get to know Janie better as she shares her insights on page 5.

In closing, we want to encourage you to join us on Saturday, October 6, for the Komen Houston Race for the Cure® run. Besides being Bronze sponsors for many years, we field an SBA team each year to stroll, walk, jog or run in this vital event that funds research and education on breast cancer. Well over half of our staff have already registered. So please join us in supporting this worthy cause and come by our booth before or after the race. Our thanks to all the volunteers who make the Komen Houston race a reality. Each year, you are bringing us closer to a cure.



OMNILUX LIGHT THERAPY

FOR ACNE

Omnilux™ light therapy is a new safe, painless and effective treatment for mild to moderate acne. It utilizes light emitting diode (LED) technology to: 1) destroy the bacteria responsible for the inflammation, 2) stimulate cell growth, 3) decrease inflammation and pore size, and 4) limit oil production in the future.

One of the key bacteria responsible for the inflammation is *Propionibacterium acnes* (or *P. acnes*). This bacteria produces natural chemicals called porphyrins, which are sensitive to light at different wavelengths. Omnilux blue™ neutralizes the bacteria that cause the redness and inflammation of acne. Combined with Omnilux revive™, which has anti-inflammatory properties, the treatment helps minimize the redness of acne lesions and promotes healthier skin.

To prepare for a treatment session, makeup and sunscreen are washed off first. Then safety eyewear is used to cover the eyes. Each treatment takes about 20 minutes. Over the course of four weeks, eight Omnilux treatments are administered, alternating between blue and red LEDs. Topical acne therapy, such as the Clenziderm MD™ system by Obagi, is recommended to further improve the results of the treatment.

Photosensitizing drugs, such as tetracycline and doxycycline, should be avoided prior to the light treatments. Individuals with photosensitivity disorders such as lupus erythematosus, porphyria or light-triggered migraines or seizures should not undergo light therapy.

Optimum results will be seen between four to eight weeks after treatment. The light stimulates natural processes that go on after the treatment has stopped. Studies have shown complete clearance of lesions in some cases. On average, you should expect 81 percent of acne lesions to clear. In some cases, maintenance treatments may be necessary to keep it under control.

FOR SKIN REJUVENATION

Versatile Omnilux™ light therapy is also a safe, painless and effective treatment that activates your skin's natural renewal system to reverse the effects of skin aging.

As we grow older, the cells that manufacture the skin's supportive structures begin to slow down. Environmental damage from the sun's rays speed up this process and produce free radicals that damage the skin and the cells that produce collagen and elastin. Omnilux combination light therapy uses visible red LEDs in conjunction with invisible infrared LEDs to stimulate these cells, leading to a softening of fine lines and improved skin tone, clarity and texture. Studies have shown over 80 percent of participants reported a softening of fine lines, and 75 percent reported improvement in skin softness and smoothness. The results you see with Omnilux continue to improve for up to four to six months after the light treatment.

Alternating light treatments are done twice a week for four weeks. Before each treatment, makeup and sunscreen are removed, then safety eyewear is used to shield the eyes from the bright light. Each session lasts approximately 20 minutes.

We offer Omnilux treatments six days a week through The SPA at SBA, making it easier to schedule your twice-weekly therapies. For more information about Omnilux or to schedule an appointment, please call 713.850.0240, ext. 101 or 138.

10TH ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSE CELEBRATION

On Saturday, October 20, you are invited to join us at our annual open house celebration. The festivities will be held in The Centers for Medical and Cosmetic Dermatology and The Center for Skin Research from 9:00 a.m. to 12 noon at 1900 St. James Place, 6th floor.

As always, we have a banner line-up of skin-care professionals who will be there to inform you and answer your questions on the latest advances in medical and cosmetic dermatology. 2007 has brought its share of new treatments and products. So don't miss this opportunity to find out what you can do to improve and rejuvenate your skin. You can also learn about our currently enrolling clinical trials.

So far, 26 experts representing 13 different companies will be stationed in different rooms throughout all three Centers. They will be making on-going presentations and answering your questions on various skin-related issues, such as photodynamic and light therapies for acne, facial skin rejuvenation, resurfacing and tightening, cellulite, rosacea, permanent hair reduction and wrinkles. Refer to The Program for our list

of presenters and their topics. The SPA at SBA will be providing free glo[™]minerals makeup lessons all morning as well as answering your questions on our various SPA services.

You can also have a free, special UV photo taken of your face that will reveal your hidden sun damage. It's a real motivator to stick with your sunscreen and a proven skin-care regimen! To get an accurate picture of your skin's condition, come without any foundation makeup or be prepared to remove it for the photo. You can reapply your makeup afterwards.

In addition, there will be refreshments, door prizes, and other giveaways. Feel free to join us for a few minutes or stay the whole morning. So come, be informed, bring a friend, see The Centers and have fun. It's our way of helping you learn more about your skin and what can be done to keep it healthy and looking fresh. Please RSVP via e-mail to apatterson@sba-skincare.com or call 713.850.0240 and press 114.

THE PROGRAM

Dermal Fillers: Deciding Which One's Right for You

Suzanne Bruce, M.D.

FotoFacial[™] and FotoFirm[™]: Skin Rejuvenation

Leigh Ellen Eubanks, M.D.

Thermage[®] and Body by Thermage[™]: Tighter Skin without Surgery Eyes by Thermage[™]: Younger Looking Eyes

Miriam S. Hanson, M.D.

Fraxel[™]: Fractional Resurfacing for Aging and Sun Damaged Skin

April L. Harrison, PA-C

Treating Wrinkles with Non-Ablative Lasers

Marcela S. Ramirez, RN

Permanent Hair Reduction for All Skin Types

Treating Acne and Acne Scars: Lasers, Light and Photodynamic Therapy

Maria Antesoda, RN

The SPA at SBA: From Peels to Omnilux[™] – Spa Services Good for Your Skin

Maria Martinez, Aesthetician and Spa Services Provider
Amanda Parrish, Aesthetician and Spa Services Provider
Janie Umanzor, Patient Care Coordinator

The Center for Skin Research: Current Clinical Research Studies

Sandy Nero, CRC
Kristy Madia, Coordinator Assistant
Sue Shannon, Coordinator Assistant

BOTOX[®] Cosmetic and Juvéderm[™] Injectable Gel: Wrinkle Treatment for the Full Face

Ashley Linn, Senior Business Development Manager
Allergan Facial Aesthetics

Restylane[®]/Perlane[®]: Redefining Beauty[™]

Sabrina Janecka, Professional Sales Specialist
Medicis[®] Aesthetics

Sculptra[™]: Volumize Your Skin for the Duration You Deserve

Sean Moritz, Aesthetic Sales Professional
Dermik[®] Aesthetics

Obagi[®] System: Transforming Your Skin

Elastiderm[™]: The Missing Piece of the Anti-aging Puzzle for Your Eyes Clenziderm MD[™]: Breakthrough Acne Solution

Chantel McCollum, Sales Representative
Obagi Medical Products, Inc.

BenzaClin[®]: Acne Solutions

April Davis, Executive Sales Professional
Dermik/sanofi-aventis Dermatology

Tazorac[®]: Visible Results for Facial Fine Wrinkles and Dark Spots BOTOX[®]: The Solution for Severe Underarm Sweating

Jebb Ruff, Territory Manager
Allergan Dermatology Therapeutics

SkinMedica[™]: New Life for Your Skin – Rebel, Rebuild, Reborn

Michele Cappi, Cosmeceutical Sales Consultant
SkinMedica Aesthetic Division

RETIN-A MICRO[®] Pump: Acne Treatment Made Easy Renova[®]: Reducing Photodamage to Look Your Best BIAFINE[®]: Enhanced Skin Healing for Laser Treatment, Sunburn, and Actinic Keratosis

Lisa L. Fulenwider, Professional Sales Representative
OrthoNeutrogena

Age Intervention[®] Conditioners: Revitalized Hair and More Lustrous Lashes

Sherry Stell, Account Executive
Jan Marini Skin Research

Prevage[®] MD: A Topical Antioxidant You Can Believe In

Adele Piliszek, Territory Manager – Topical Aesthetics
Allergan Facial Aesthetics

Glo[™]minerals: Skin Nurturing Makeup for Beauty with a Higher Purpose

Andrea T. Massarano, Sales Consultant
Caleel+Hayden

Aveeno[®]: Discover the Science of Active Naturals

Misty Redding
Johnson & Johnson Consumer Companies, Inc.

MetroGel[®] 1% & Differin[®] 0.3%: Solutions for Rosacea and Acne Cetaphil[®]: Cleansers and Moisturizers That Benefit Every Body

Mark Hall, Sales Representative
Galderma Laboratories, L.P.

Biopelle: Discover Your Skin's Potential

Jeff Starling, Sales Consultant
Biopelle, Aesthetics Division of Ferndale Laboratories, Inc.

UV Photography: Uncovering the Sun Damage You Can't See
Photography equipment courtesy of Allergan, Inc. and Johnson & Johnson Consumer Cos., Inc.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6

7:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Komen Houston Race for the Cure®
Sam Houston Park – Downtown

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6

8:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Saturday Medical Appointments
The Center for Medical Dermatology

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

8:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Saturday Medical Appointments
The Center for Medical Dermatology

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 20

9:00 a.m. – 12 noon

10th Anniversary Open House Celebration
All Three Centers
RSVP – 713.850.0240, ext. 114

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3

8:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Saturday Medical Appointments
The Center for Medical Dermatology

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17

8:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Saturday Medical Appointments
The Center for Medical Dermatology

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 1

8:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Saturday Medical Appointments
The Center for Medical Dermatology

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15

8:00 a.m. – 12 noon

Saturday Medical Appointments
The Center for Medical Dermatology

We offer cosmetic appointments every Saturday, except Saturday, October 20.

OCTOBER SPECIALS

Check out our specials on Sculptra™, ArteFill®, Omnilux™ acne and skin rejuvenation treatment packages, and Clenziderm MD™ acne therapeutic system at www.sba-skincare.com.

FILLING YOU IN ON DERMAL FILLERS

Dermal fillers are not new. However, never since the introduction of injectable bovine collagen in 1981 has there been more buzz and new offerings in this growing area of facial rejuvenation. We've been so excited about all the new products that we dubbed 2007 the year of the dermal filler. Here is our rundown of what's available and what we recommend to our patients seeking treatment to fill various wrinkles, hollow cheeks and acne scars.

We begin with the observation that, like many other cosmetic procedures, consumer preference plays a definite role in what dermal filler we use. Our preliminary consultation on fillers is a dialog with our patient about the condition he/she wants to correct and the results he/she wishes to achieve. Certain fillers yield better results for nasolabial folds versus lips, lip lines versus sunken cheeks, and areas around the eyes. Also, the depth of the fold can argue for the use of a thicker filler. Another distinction is that certain injectables provide instantaneous results, which may fit the particular need of our client because of an upcoming event, like a wedding or reunion, for which he/she is preparing. Longer-lasting fillers tend to yield results over time rather than immediately after injection by encouraging and stimulating the growth of the patient's own collagen.

Collagen – The first FDA-approved dermal filler was collagen. Although available in its original bovine-derivative form, the vast majority of the collagen we inject is human, thus avoiding the need for skin testing for allergic reaction to the bovine formulation. Collagen is a great first-time filler – it goes in smoothly with little discomfort and produces an immediate plumping of the skin. We use CosmoDerm® to fill in fine lines, especially vertical lip lines, and wrinkles. We inject thicker CosmoPlast® to treat deeper wrinkles, define the lip border and fill in acne scars. The main disadvantage is that it lasts only three to six months, but for first timers concerned about how the treatment will look, this short duration serves to reduce risk.

Hyaluronic Acid (HA) Dermal Fillers – HA dermal fillers are by far our most popular plumping agents. We treat approximately five times as many patients with this filler type as all our other fillers combined. HA is a crystal-clear, non-animal, biodegradable gel based on a natural substance. The most commonly-treated areas are the nasolabial folds (from the nose to the corners of the mouth), the glabellar lines (between the eyebrows), the marionette lines (from the corners of the mouth to the jaw line), and the lips. HA can also improve acne and chicken pox scars. There is no testing required, and results are instantaneous. We carry two families of hyaluronic acid fillers – Restylane®/Perlane® and Juvéderm™ Ultra/Ultra Plus. Restylane and Juvéderm Plus are less concentrated gels used to fill most superficial lines, wrinkles and lips, while Perlane and Juvéderm Ultra Plus are thicker formulations for deeper wrinkle filling. So which is better? And why do we carry both? We think this answer lies more in the eyes of our patients, just like preferring Coke over Pepsi, so we offer both. Both offer longer correction periods than collagen. Restylane/Perlane, the more established brand (FDA-approved 2003), is indicated to last for about six months, while the Juvéderm family (FDA-approved 2006) can last up to six months or longer. To date, there have been no head-to-head clinical trials between these competing formulations.

ArteFill® – ArteFill is the first and only FDA-approved, non-resorbable (often referred to as permanent) wrinkle filler for the correction of smile lines (nasolabial folds). ArteFill contains 20 percent polymethylmethacrylate PMMA microspheres and 80 percent bovine-collagen gel with 0.3 percent lidocaine, an anesthetic. The bovine collagen plumps the skin immediately, but is reabsorbed by the body in about a month. However, the microspheres remain behind and the patient's own collagen builds up around the microspheres. Most people need a second treatment three months after the initial injection to obtain optimal correction of the wrinkle. Current clinical results indicate that ArteFill will last up to five years. Because of the bovine collagen component, a simple skin test is performed. If the test is negative, you may undergo your initial facial treatment a month later. Although the typical two treatments cost more initially, ArteFill is cheaper in the long-run when compared to the recurring cost of non-permanent dermal fillers.

Sculptra™ – Although often categorized as a filler, Sculptra, like ArteFill, is a tissue augmentor. Sculptra is FDA-approved for the restoration and/or correction of the signs of facial fat loss (lipotrophy) in people with human immunodeficiency virus and is pending approval for cosmetic use. We have been using it "off label" to treat wrinkles and facial contour irregularities (particularly hollowness in cheeks) since 2004. Sculptra contains an injectable material known as poly-L-lactic acid (pLa), a biocompatible, biodegradable material used in dissolvable sutures. Injected below the area of fat loss, the pLa stimulates the body to produce new collagen resulting in a gradual increase in skin thickness. We usually perform a second treatment to achieve the desired results. Because it stimulates actual collagen production, Sculptra's major advantage is that it can last two years. For those wanting longer-lasting results but who are not ready for a permanent filler, Sculptra is the answer.

What are the risks? Side effects are infrequent and temporary. With dermal fillers, you can expect mild swelling and redness, and occasional bruising at the injection site. Although uncommon, lumps and bumps are possible, but can be treated if they occur.

If you'd like to personally discuss the treatment that is right for you, call today to set up a consultation with one of our experienced providers at 713.850.0240.

INTRODUCING

JANIE UMANZOR, PATIENT CARE COORDINATOR

Q. *Janie, you are a very familiar face here at Suzanne Bruce and Associates. Tell us about your experience here.*

A. I am proud to say that I have been with Dr. Bruce since the beginning, since day one. Until I joined her staff, I had been working as a medical receptionist, and I interviewed with Dr. Bruce when she was just opening her practice. I had known of Dr. Bruce, and I was interested in working for her. I was hired that very same day. I was nervous the first day, but I thought it would be okay because we would probably have a slow start. But right then and there, from day one, we were busy. We already had a full schedule, and I was part of it. I made the first charts for the first patients. We even got our first patient to pay \$1 in cash. We marked the bill – May 4, 1997 – and we still have it.

Q. *Dr. Bruce's practice has grown considerably since those first days.*

A. We have never had a dull moment. We moved from our three-room clinic at St. Luke's Medical Tower to St. James Place in 2000, and we have been growing ever since. In the beginning at St. Luke's, our lunchroom was on someone's desk. Now, we have The Center for Cosmetic Dermatology, The Center for Medical Dermatology, The Center for Skin Research and The SPA at SBA.

Q. *As someone who has been with Dr. Bruce since the beginning, to what do you attribute the success?*

A. First and foremost, Dr. Bruce is a wonderful doctor. She is very moral, very dedicated to her patients. And, she sets the example for all of us. She is honest, open-minded, forward thinking.

Dr. Bruce has joined with doctors of the same caliber – knowledgeable, dedicated and caring. For her staff, she has been selective in recruiting, looking for individuals with the right professional training and goals that are a match for the practice. She wants her employees to succeed, so she gives them the right tools and insists on continual training.

She is also always researching and looking for the most effective treatments. She is curious about new technology, looking for the best for our patients. She insists on the very top level of patient care. This all adds up to excellence. We are all intent on upholding the best standards in all areas. Dr. Bruce is leading the way.

Q. *Your primary experience here had been as office manager, at the front desk. Now, you've moved to be a Patient Care Coordinator. Tell us how that position serves the practice.*

A. The Patient Care Coordinator is a very important part of the SBA practice. As a Patient Care Coordinator, I am the first point of contact for our patients beyond the front office. During initial con-

sultations, it is my job to listen and record the patient's interests and concerns. I am attentive and try to anticipate what each patient wants. That way, I can prepare what the doctor will need for an effective visit. Usually in these consultations, a lot of treatment options are discussed. After the doctor leaves, I give further explanation on procedures, answer patient questions, and describe how to prepare for treatment. I am also available by phone or e-mail after the consultation for additional questions, and I call patients after certain procedures to see how they are doing. It is in my nature to care for people, and so my move to Patient Care Coordinator is very rewarding.

Some of our international patients depend on me. I am a native Houstonian, Hispanic, and I speak Spanish. I help our patients who are Spanish-speaking. Many of them will ask for me because I can help translate between the doctor and the patient.

Q. *How does your previous experience here make you a better Patient Care Coordinator?*

A. Throughout my ten years, I have watched and learned from Dr. Bruce. She is a motivator. She never gives up, until a problem is resolved, and the patient is happy. I have been instilled with this same work ethic. I am caring, a people person, and I go beyond what is expected. Now, patients who have known me from the front desk recognize me. I know them all. One woman, one of the first I took care of as a Patient Care Coordinator, remembered me from her years of coming to SBA. She was so pleased to see me in the patient room. I remember when she first came here, her baby was six months old. Now, that baby is nine!

Q. *Tell us about your life outside of work.*

A. I am a single parent; the mother of a 15-year-old boy. Having a teenager, I am very careful. He's a good kid, and I hope he is learning from me as I have learned from Dr. Bruce.

Q. *You have been here since day one. Are you proud of the practice and your work here?*

A. When I started, I knew I was going to work for a good, good doctor, but I don't think I realized how important that was. I have always been proud of whom I work for, but as we have grown, I realize that I am privileged to work with many fine providers at SBA. For my 10-year anniversary, I was surprised with a bracelet from Tiffany's for my years of service. I was very pleased. And now, I look back and remember those first days when I was happy just to have my own little workspace. I remember thinking that this was going to be a huge opportunity – and it has been. Suzanne Bruce and Associates continues to grow and offer patients the best dermatology care. And I am a part of that. It is very rewarding.

CURRENT TRIALS

AT THE CENTER FOR SKIN RESEARCH

The Center for Skin Research is our dermatological research division. We conduct clinical research trials for major pharmaceutical companies and clinical research organizations seeking FDA approval. The research involves testing investigational drugs and treatment devices for a wide variety of skin problems, such as acne, atopic dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis, seborrheic dermatitis and skin aging.

Interested in taking part in one of our clinical research trials? Eligible participants receive investigational treatment at no cost and compensation for time and travel. For more information on currently enrolling trials, call **713.985.0210** or check on our website under Clinical Trials.

ACNE 101

A PRIMER ON ACNE AND ITS CAUSES

Acne is one of the most common skin diseases we see on all sides of our practice – medical, cosmetic and research. Approximately 80 percent of people experience it, most commonly during adolescence or young adulthood. Acne affects self-esteem and, if left untreated, can leave permanent scars. There are now a wide variety of conventional and innovative treatments we offer acne sufferers. So here is a primer on the causes of acne and what solutions are available today to fight it.

Even though all of us are aware that acne usually starts during the teen years, sometimes we tend to forget why that is. Acne is a hormonal disease; no hormones, no acne. The hormones set in motion a cascade of events that triggers the blackheads, whiteheads, and red bumps that everyone hates. Androgen hormones cause oil glands to produce more oil, causing plugged pores. Bacteria called *Propionibacterium acnes* (or *P. acnes*) proliferate in the plugged pores and cause inflamed red bumps and pustules.

Many effective acne treatments work by unclogging the plugged pores and killing the bacteria. Pore unclogging treatments include drugs such as Retin-A, Differin, and Tazorac, and in-office treatments such as micro and vibra dermabrasion and chemical peels. Bacteria-killing treatments include topical and oral antibacterial agents, such as benzoyl peroxide, clindamycin, tetracycline, minocycline, and doxycycline. Another way to inhibit or kill the bacteria that cause acne is to use laser and light sources, such as the CoolTouch®, Aurora™, blue light and the new Omnilux LED therapy (see related article). You can make the light treatments even more effective against acne by applying a drug called Levulan® prior to the light treatment. This is called photodynamic therapy.

If the treatments listed above aren't effective in controlling the acne, we bring out the "big gun" – isotretinoin (brand names are Accutane®, Claravis™ and Sotret®). A five-month regimen with isotretinoin can dramatically clear up acne. However, because severe birth defects can occur if a woman becomes pregnant while taking isotretinoin, she must be on two methods of birth control and comply with strict monitoring requirements (called iPLEDGE). Although rare, isotretinoin can trigger depression in some patients. Because of these potential side effects, some patients prefer other treatment options.

But let's take a step back for a moment. All of the treatments mentioned so far deal with the consequences of the hormones acting on the oil glands. What can be done to affect the hormones that are the root cause of the acne?

The hormones that cause acne come from three sources: 1) dairy products that contain hormones, 2) the adrenals ("stress" glands), and 3) the ovaries or testicles. The acne-causing hormones from these three sources are additive. If, when added together, they exceed an individual's "acne threshold," acne will result.

What can be done to address these sources of acne-causing hormones? The first thing to do is stop all dairy products – no exceptions – for 6 to 12 months and see what happens. This is a no-cost, "natural" approach. Because the acne-producing hormones come from multiple sources, not all patients who stop all dairy consumption improve 100 percent. For help in implementing the "No Milk Acne Diet," visit the website at www.acnemilk.com.

To help reduce the acne-causing hormones released by the adrenal glands when you are under stress, there are a variety of stress-reduction techniques available such as exercise, music, art and meditation. One good starting place is Herbert Benson, M.D.'s book, *The Relaxation Response*.

The third major source of acne-causing hormones is the gonads (ovaries for women, testicles for men). In men, the option of suppressing their androgens is not available. Women have several options for controlling acne-causing hormones released by the ovaries. One of the best options is the birth control pill, Yaz®, which contains the androgen-blocker drospirenone. Yaz is FDA-approved to treat acne in addition to being approved for premenstrual dysphoric disorder (what was once called "PMS"). For post-menopausal women who still suffer from acne, drospirenone is available in combination with estradiol in a hormone replacement therapy called Angeliq®. If the drospirenone-containing oral contraceptives alone are not enough, another drug that can be added for extra androgen suppression is spironolactone.

We now have a wide array of treatments at our disposal to help you achieve the clear, acne-free skin you desire. We can try to get at the underlying root cause by addressing the hormonal issues that are fueling the flames of acne. We can also use traditional topicals, antibiotics, isotretinoin and laser or light therapies to stamp out the fire. Start by making an appointment with one of our dermatologists so we can help guide you on your path to clear, beautiful skin. Call 713.850.0240 for an appointment.

I would like to acknowledge William Danby, M.D., for many of the ideas on the hormonal causes and treatment of acne. He has written and lectured extensively on this subject.

Suzanne Bruce, M.D. • Leigh Ellen Eubanks, M.D. • Miriam L. Hanson, M.D. (Board-eligible)
Board Certified, American Board of Dermatology; Fellows, American Academy of Dermatology

SUZANNE BRUCE AND ASSOCIATES, P.A.

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