

**BEAUTY:  
TAKE OFF  
10 YEARS**  
(IT'S ALL ABOUT  
YOUR NECK)

**HOT  
MONOGAMY:  
MAKING SEX  
BETTER AFTER  
COMMITMENT**

ELLE **BEAUTY** BODY HEALTH



**THE INSIDER: DENNIS GROSS, MD**

IN A TOWNHOUSE ON A QUIET NEW YORK CITY BLOCK, THIS DOCTOR MINISTERS TO SOME OF MANHATTAN'S MOST HIGH-PROFILE COMPLEXIONS. BY MEGAN DEEM

Rites of passage for NYC fashion industry insiders include their first Manolo Blahnik sample sale; meeting Donna or Marc; and scoring an appointment with dermatologist Dennis Gross, MD. While his patients may be used to high drama, Gross is a calming presence (with an attention to detail that rivals the most haute couturier) for whom no imperfection is too minor. But he doesn't follow fads and is the first to tell someone if the treatment she wants is too aggressive. A clear-skin cheerleader with a science geek's approach to product formulation, Gross and his line, MD Skincare, received this year's Entertaining Beauty Award from industry group Cosmetic Executive Women. His easy-to-use range cuts clutter with a minimum of products to solve each skin concern (the new antiacne protocol consists of just three items, for example)—all of which allows Gross's clientele to focus on more pressing matters, such as the season's new silhouette.

**When it comes to skin care, what's the biggest mistake women make?** Getting started too late on slowing down the aging process. When we're young, skin produces a lot of collagen. Keeping cells revved up and stimulated is preferable to letting the cell machinery run down and then trying to revive it later. There's more to suppressing wrinkles than just applying sunscreen on a regular basis. Topical antioxidants and peptides are very effective preventative agents.

**I feel as though I break out more in the fall than I do in the summer, when I'm wearing tons of sunblock and sweating. Am I an anomaly?** No, I always say the most important of the monthly alpha-beta acid peels is the one in September. Incidental UV exposure in the summertime, even if you wear sunscreen and don't sunbathe, causes skin to undergo a natural thickening process. That means there's more of a mantle—a layer of dead skin and oil—which the peel gets rid of.

**You've said that overly dry skin can clog pores. How?**

Some people produce oil that's heavy and viscous, not free-flowing. It's like Crisco compared with olive oil. The thick oil is more likely to congest a pore and will adhere to the dead, dry skin flakes and become

even denser. Overdrying with antiacne products results in more flakes and can actually worsen the problem.

**What's a hands-free way to get rid of skin plugs?**

Bioré strips are a simple option to dislodge an obstructed oil gland. They allow for gentle extraction. Steaming your face for 15 minutes twice a week will also loosen sludge in pores. Wet your face with some warm water first because it's that much more water to heat up from the steamer and liberate those jammed oil glands.

**So I should steam and then apply my antiaging cream?**

Yes, but let your skin return to room temperature. Most products are designed to be effective in what's called physiologic conditions. Temperature affects the chemistry of their ingredients. If your face is overheated, the item's design may be less effective. The exception is if you're rubbing on plain moisturizer because you want to lock in the water.

**What in-office treatment gives the most dramatic results?**

For medium to deep lines, injectables such as Botox and Restylane provide the quickest change. Fine lines, textural issues, and problems such as sunspots and redness require lasers and chemical peels to give the largest improvement.

**Obviously you do injections to increase the size of your patients' lips.**

**Why formulate a topical lip-plumping product?**

I thought I could do better than what was out there. I applied the idea of injecting Restylane, which is hyaluronic acid, into lips. Hyaluronic acid can hold anywhere between 100 and 1,000 times its weight in water, but if you put it into a cream for that purpose, you can't use that much because hyaluronic acid is very sticky. So I created a two-step system for my MD Skincare line. The first part is a viscous gel with a high concentration of hyaluronic acid that will increase volume, but doesn't have a good finish. The second step contains collagen-building peptides with a nice end result that you can apply lipstick on top of.

**Are eye creams really necessary, or is that just another way to get us to buy stuff at the cosmetics counter?**

Yes they are, and I'm not just saying that because I make them. The skin around the eye is more prone to the breakdown of collagen and elastin than the rest of the face. But paradoxically, because the skin's so thin, it needs special formulations that are strong, yet gentle. An antiaging lotion for the face could irritate the eye area and make it more vulnerable. □



**Doctor bag:** (Clockwise from near left) Bioré Deep Cleansing Pore Strips; for those who absolutely must mess with a pimple, the La Cross Zit Zapper is "similar to what I use in my office," Gross says; the main ingredient in MD Skincare All-Over Blemish Solution is salicylic acid. "It's superb at loosening the cement of a blocked oil gland, but like any acid, it loses potency when mixed with water, so a water-free delivery system is crucial"; the hyaluronic-acid step of MD Skincare Serious Lip Treatment; Canair Facial Sauna.

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