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Face value

Finding the right dermatologist can be daunting. Our guide to the top ones in your city will bring you closer to your skin saviour.

MONTREAL THE HARD-LINER



Dr. Robin Billick
Jewish General Hospital,
3755 Côte-Ste-Catherine Rd.,
Suite G026, 514-340-8272,
ext. 3409

A diehard evangelist for sunscreen, Billick is equally keen about the new and approved Alma Accent technique to tighten and smooth skin using radio frequency.

What's the most common thing you see in your office? "Sagging! Over time and with sun exposure, the elastic fibres in our skin clump together, and jowls start to form, or you get a turkey neck. Lax tissue is from sun damage."

What else? "Sadly, I see a lot of young people—including kids—with skin cancer. They're often blonde-haired, blue-eyed kids from the suburbs who spend all summer in the pool. Also, sun damage is cumulative and can take 10 to 20 years to show up."

What's the biggest concern you have? "People who don't realize that sunscreen is a year-round, lifelong thing—every day! And wear a big hat all the time, even when it's cloudy. In my office, I ask people to look at the skin on their breasts and their

bum. That skin doesn't have nearly as many moles because there is no sun exposure. You can see for yourself."

What annoys you? "When people are deceived by expensive creams. Sure, you can spend \$135 for a cream and your skin will feel great for a few hours, but it's not nearly as important as wearing a hat and applying sunscreen."

What else? "Tanning beds. They should be banned. They promote aging and skin cancer. Bronzing gels are fine, and spray-on tans are fine. Neutrogena has a good tanning lotion."

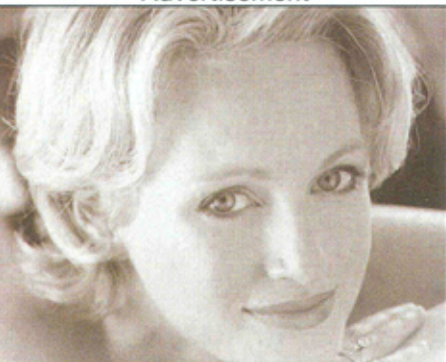
Any tips for skin care? "Other than the religious application of sunscreen, I'd advise people with acne not to use too many different kinds of creams at once. If you do, it's hard to tell which one is working."

THE SMOOTH OPERATOR



Dr. Alfred Balbul
5492 Queen Mary Rd.,
514-282-8815

Revered for his acne-busting potions, Balbul soothes your worries with his personalized, hand-mixed creams. From wrinkles to brown spots, he sorts out your concerns. What's the most common thing you see in your office? "People who forget about the »



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winter sun. The sun reflects off the snow, so it's a double whammy! You can do a lot of damage to your skin with sun exposure early in the year—before May. Skiers and winter sports people need to constantly apply their sunscreen of SPF 15, minimum, but preferably SPF 30."

What else? "Pigment changes in the skin. I see a lot of people with red and brown spots from sun exposure. This would be a good time for me to repeat the lecture about using SPF 30 before you apply your makeup in the morning. Even if you don't think you're going outside, put it on anyway. The physical barriers, titanium dioxide and zinc oxide are what you need."

What's the biggest concern you have? "Overwashing. You need to maintain your own natural oil barrier. Use a mild cleanser, avoid harsh soaps, and try to use liquid formulations and cleansing milks. Over-stripping the skin is terrible."

Any tips for skin care? "Instead of going to a tanning bed, which I'm against, get some colour by drinking half a glass of carrot juice mixed with a few freshly squeezed cranberries. It's a shot of vitamins A and C, plus you'll get a nice skin colour within three or four weeks."

THE LASER ADVOCATE



Dr. Jean-François Tremblay Clinique MédIME, 6100 Boisé Ave., 514-739-7444, medime.ca

Wielding more than 10 types of lasers in his office, Tremblay is adept at shrinking pores and slowing oil production. He's also busy doing Thermage treatments for non-surgical lifts.

What's the most common thing you see in your office? "I see a lot of rosacea: dilated blood vessels on the nose and the cheeks. It's prevalent in people with light skin and hair. Nobody likes looking flushed, especially after exercise or drinking a glass of wine. Some people get what's known as a 'brandy nose' with rosacea, and some get pimples with it. We can treat it with lasers, creams and antibiotics."

What else? "Complaints about brown spots. Brown spots are from sun exposure. And I see a lot of dilated pores, too. We can shrink pores and decrease oil production with different types of lasers and light sources."

What's the biggest concern you have? "That the public education campaigns about skin cancer aren't reaching everyone. People underuse sunscreen. It needs to be

a minimum of SPF 30, with UVA and UVB protection. We used to think that UVA wasn't damaging, but we know better now. Everyone needs to apply sunscreen at least 30 minutes before sun exposure, to let it penetrate the skin—especially if they're doing sports, like skiing or water sports."

What else? "The growing problem of aestheticians who open salons and offer laser treatments without the proper training or medical knowledge. There can be serious complications. I've seen a few in my office."

What annoys you? "Creams and cleansers that claim to shrink pore size—they can't. They can provide a deep cleaning and create a matte texture, but that's about it. And why do people rub alcohol or calamine lotion on eczema? Stop it. It makes things worse! Likewise, face washes for oily skin can make things worse by overdrying the skin. It causes a rebound effect of increased oil production."

What else? "Misconceptions that lasers can do everything. People arrive with photographs of their favourite film stars and want to look like that. If you have scars and deep wrinkles, you can't expect a laser machine, or any machine, to give you the skin of a 20-year-old."

Any tips for skin care? "For acne-prone skin, be sure to use a sunscreen that's water- or gel-based, and avoid waterproof ones—they're oil-based."

TORONTO THE A-LISTER



Dr. G. Daniel Schachter Cosmetic Dermatology on Bloor, 208 Bloor St. W., Suite 404, 416-922-6869, unlockyourbeauty.com

The consulting dermatologist to the Toronto Raptors (we don't even want to think about the sort of rashes those boys come in with), Schachter is often the go-to guy for stars passing through the GTA.

What are you best known for? "Cosmetically, probably Botox and lasers. Medically, I have a major interest in psoriasis."

What new treatments are coming out? "Biological agents that are given as injections and target certain parts of the immune system that seem to be causing troubles with psoriasis. Thermage lasers are being used to tighten the skin on the lower and upper face, and they can give a tiny bit of lifting."

At what point do you refer your patients

to a plastic surgeon? "If I'm seeing somebody and their sun damage or aging is too advanced for, let's say, Botox and filling, but they really need a lift because they're getting jowls or their brows are falling, I might refer to a plastic surgeon."

What kinds of problems do stars come to you with? "They're going on-camera, and they have a cold sore, a zit or a rash. They might need a touch-up on their Botox or fillers. We've had somebody who had Sofform [a Gore-Tex strip that used to be placed permanently in lips] that was starting to come out, and we had to trim it."

THE STRAIGHT SHOOTER



Dr. Vince Bertucci Institute of Dermatology & Cosmetic Surgery, 8333 Weston Rd., Suite 401, Woodbridge, 905-850-4415, drbertucci.com

He was one of the first in Canada to use Botox cosmetically, but don't expect Bertucci to promise you lips like Angelina Jolie's. He's not about false hope.

What are you recognized for? "There is nothing better than the truth. That doesn't mean being rude but explaining what you really can and can't achieve with the different things that are available. I'm not a salesperson. I'm not going to pitch you something just because it's the latest, hottest thing."

What is your skin care philosophy? "Less is more. Do no harm. Looking at the whole big picture and individualizing treatment, because what may work for one individual may not work for another."

Any exciting new products? "Injectable fillers similar to Restylane and Perlane will soon be introduced to the marketplace; [they] might potentially last longer and are changing the way we look at the face. Before we were just like, 'Let's fill this line and stop it from forming.' Now we're looking at the whole big picture and what's happening as we age. Like volume loss: Our face is becoming a balloon that's deflating. So you can give volume not by doing a facelift and removing skin, but by filling where there's a deficit."

Why is the dermatologist's medical role so important? "There are many rare conditions that are best diagnosed by a dermatologist. Diseases like lupus might show up first in the skin before they [show] internally." »

THE PERSONALITY



Dr. Paul Cohen
Rosedale Dermatology
Centre, 1366 Yonge St.,
416-487-1978,
drpaulcohen.com

If you're sick of the wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am rush at the doctor's office, you'll find Cohen, resident derm on TV's *Canada AM*, actually cares about your overall health. He'll also crack a few jokes while he's at it.

Why go to a dermatologist? "Plastic surgeons are extremely skilled people, but they're not the ones who can tell you whether your moles are good or bad. People are going to aestheticians and nurses, and unfortunately you can get Botox anywhere—at a hot dog stand, practically. So many people are doing it, but that doesn't mean they're doing it properly."

What is your approach to skin care? "The most important thing is your health. I've had countless episodes where people came in for a chemical peel or laser treatment, and I'll say, 'Let me just take a peek at your back,' and I've taken skin cancers off them."

What is the most common skin misconception? "That if you have a tan you're not going to burn or damage your skin. When you're tanned, you've already damaged your skin. People are in complete denial. Skin cancer is something that affects young men and women, not just old people."

How has the landscape of dermatology changed over the years? "It's evolving into more of a cosmetic practice, but there's only a certain number of people who are trained appropriately to deal with skin cancer. We keep losing our manpower; it's actually a really scary thing."

VANCOUVER THE LASER SPECIALIST



Dr. Joanna Day
2419 Bellevue Ave.,
Suite 103, West Vancouver,
604-925-9798, daymd.com

Her self-proclaimed "super specialty" is laser resurfacing, and with all the new technology—including the Sciton Erbium laser, recently approved in Canada, which lets you get back to work, sans wrinkles, in just six days—Day is busier than ever.

What is something not enough people do to take care of their skin? "Hands down: not

using sunscreens effectively. People may have a great product, but if you don't put enough on, it won't do its job. Also, many cosmetics are advertised as having an SPF value, but unless they're certified by the Canadian Dermatology Association they may not be as effective as they state."

There's a stereotype that Vancouverites are more natural-health-oriented than other Canadians. Is this true as far as our choice of dermatological treatments goes? "There are certainly people who try to use only natural products, and those individuals are probably buying products from health food stores. Do we really know the benefit of applying papaya or cucumber to the skin? In general, though, I think people are aware that the value of chemicals in products like sunscreen far outweighs any possible downsides."

What is the most common misconception about skin care and achieving beautiful skin? "[One] misconception is that using advertised cosmetic products can prevent aging of the skin. Growing old is mandatory, but looking old is optional. We can control environmental influences by protecting ourselves from the sun and making lifestyle choices like not smoking."

THE ANTI-AGING EXPERT



Dr. Gidon Frame
Anti-Aging Medical &
Laser Clinic, 2482 W.
41st Ave., 604-261-9121,
antiagingvancouver.com

An aesthetic physician, Frame opened his anti-aging practice in Kerrisdale six years ago. "When I first started out [as an MD] 18 years ago, there was little demand for anti-aging cosmetic procedures. Now there is increased demand, increased awareness and more accessible, non-invasive treatment possibilities."

What is your skin philosophy? "The key to anti-aging cosmetics is anti-aging medicine, meaning you have to look after the functional and wellness side of aging. If you don't look after your physical and psychological well-being, then your cosmetic health will suffer and, ultimately, won't even matter."

What is the biggest skin concern you see? "The effects of aging: wrinkles, sagging, sun damage, pigment changes, blemishes, dark marks."

Are there any specific issues due to the Vancouver climate? "Vancouverites spend more time outdoors, both in the winter and in the summer. Prolonged sun and wind

exposure speeds up aging, especially when it comes to broken red blood vessels on the cheeks. This can occur with age but is worsened by being outside year-round."

What is the most common misconception about skin care and achieving beautiful skin? "That there's nothing you can do about it. Everybody can do something, whether it's in little steps or in big steps. The littlest step you can take is sun protection; next is to adopt a daily skin regimen, and next is Botox, which can delay the need for plastic surgery by 10 to 15 years."

THE BEAUTIFIER



Dr. Frances Jang
Skinworks, 3568 W. 41st
Ave., 604-737-7100,
drjang.ca

Gentle, easygoing Jang's specialty is non-surgical techniques that leave skin radiant. "Beauty really comes from the inside, and part of what we do as dermatologists is to help reflect it in your outer self as well."

What is the biggest skin concern you see? "Non-healthy-looking skin. People often come in complaining of non-radiant skin that doesn't reflect them or how they feel inside."

What is something not enough people do to take care of their skin? "Wear sunscreen! It is the number one anti-aging cream out there, and it should be used daily, applied thickly—and at least SPF 30."

Are there any specific issues due to the Vancouver climate? "Vancouverites are outdoors-oriented. In Toronto, women might wear more makeup, which can help protect against skin damage. There are foundations out there that contain micronized titanium, which acts as an extra barrier against the wind. Any extra protection is good."

What is the most common misconception about achieving beautiful skin? "That people with acne don't clean their skin. Acne is much more than that; it can be due to genetics, bacteria and definitely hormones."

What are some trends in dermatology you see gaining popularity? "I think we'll start to see the use of fillers to re-sculpt and re-contour an aging face a lot more, so instead of pulling the skin tight, the trend [will continue] toward inflating it, to bring about a more natural youthfulness." □

Interviews by Joanne Latimer (Montreal), Anne Rasminsky (Toronto) and Rebecca Tay (Vancouver).