



The Dermatology Institute

DUPAGE MEDICAL GROUP  
We Care For You

## Ask our dermatologist

Alix J. Charles, M.D., Board Certified, Dermatology

### Answers to all your common questions related to your skin

**Q** *I'm turning 50 this year, and age spots are starting to appear. What is the best product for keeping these at bay?*

—Dee, age 49

**A** This is one of the most common questions I get asked by my patients. As the skin matures, internal aging as well as external skin damage (i.e. sun damage) can lead to the appearance of unsightly brown spots. The best product one can use to keep these from developing is also a simple one: sunscreen. Daily use of a moisturizer with an SPF 30+ value will help minimize the sun damage that causes age related skin discoloration. Skin lightening and brightening creams are available by prescription or at your dermatologist's office, and can also be used to slowly fade away these spots over a few months. For immediate and reliable results, though, I prefer to use my lasers to make these spots disappear like magic!

**Q** *What is the best over the counter product for reducing the appearance of lines and wrinkles?*

—Nicole, age 40

**A** When it comes to keeping your skin looking its best I tell my patients there are three basic steps they need to take to establish the proper foundation for beautiful skin. The first is daily use of an SPF 30+ moisturizer. This will help to protect from the ultraviolet damage that leads to most of these problems in the first place. The next step is nightly use of a vitamin A containing cream. Regular use of vitamin A cream has been scientifically proven to rebuild collagen and reduce fine lines and wrinkles. The best vitamin A creams are only available by prescription or must be purchased at your dermatologist's office. But over the counter creams with retinol or retinyl palmitate can be acceptable substitutes. Lastly, the use of a topical antioxidant with green tea extract, Co Q 10, EGCG, coffee berry extract, etc. will also go a long way toward repairing prior sun damage and leaving you with healthy, vibrant skin. There are HUNDREDS of different skin care cream combinations and I don't recommend you try to tackle this decision alone. Make an appointment with a knowledgeable dermatologist and medical aesthetician so they can help guide you through this confusing landscape. In the long run, you will save yourself time and money by avoiding your own trial and error!

**Q** *I would like to know more about the risks/benefits of Latisse. I hear a lot of conflicting risks from my eye doctor about reactions to the preservatives of permanent darkening of the color of your eyes.*

—Jenny

**A** Latisse is one of the most revolutionary products to come to market in the past five years. With nightly application to the upper eyelash margin, patients (and their friends) will notice much longer, darker, and thicker eyelashes after only a month or two of use. I've even had patients grow lashes so long they have to trim them down to keep them from hitting their sunglasses! Like any other product on the market, a small percentage of patients may experience irritation with use. If you end up being one of these unlucky patients, simply discontinue use of the product. The risk of eye color changes is listed as a possible side effect on the Latisse package insert for a reason: the "sister" product that led to the development of Latisse is a glaucoma drug that is applied directly to the eyeball. It is this "sister" drug that can lead to permanent darkening of eye color, and only in patients with brown pigment in their eyes to begin with. At the time of this writing, the author is not aware of any cases of Latisse causing these eye color changes when properly applied to the eyelash margin only.



A. Charles, M.D.

### About Dr. Charles

Dr. Alix Charles is a board certified dermatologist with clinical interests that encompass the diagnosis and treatment of skin diseases, as well as preventive care through skin cancer screenings. He specializes in general, surgical and cosmetic dermatology in children and adults. Dr. Charles routinely deals with cutaneous oncology, ethnic skin disorders, and minimally invasive cosmetic procedures involving lasers and dermal fillers.

Dr. Charles has his dermatology office in Hinsdale, where he works with fellow dermatologist, Dr. Sharon Fang. He is a member of American Academy of Dermatology, the American Medical Association, the American Society of Dermatologic Surgery, the American Society of Cosmetic Dermatology and Aesthetic Surgery and the Chicago Dermatological Society. He is affiliated with Hinsdale and Good Samaritan Hospitals.

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