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THE SUMMER EDIT

LESSONS

in

DAMAGE

CONTROL:

OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS WEIGHS IN

DAMAGE CONTROL LESSON: THE SUN

By now we all know now that prevention via SPF and antioxidants is key. But not all of us have been diligent about these things since childhood, and many of us have committed mortal skin care sins in the past, like visiting tanning beds and getting bad sunburns. So, what's the damage, really? Well, before we get to that, we need to make sure you understand that most of your sun damage was inflicted during—and before, even—your teens: "We get 90% of our sun damage by the age of 18," confirms San Diego plastic surgeon Dr. Richard Chafco. "But it can take decades for the effects to present themselves as skin cancer. The good news is that we can still make a difference by taking the right precautionary measures," Dr. Grant Stevens agrees. "Young people may not realize what lies beneath their skin in terms of damage. They can't see any issues, so they think it's okay to continue with bad habits like tanning beds. No obvious damage will manifest itself until later in life, but when it does, it will make you look years older."

DAMAGE CONTROL LESSON: ALCOHOL

Wine aficionados in particular are well aware of all the information out there stating the benefits of a nice glass of red. Whether it's enzymes or antioxidants, there's always some sort of rationale with which to run, and while that reasoning may actually be perfectly valid, the fact remains that overdoing it is not advisable. "Alcohol causes the blood vessels to swell, and the high levels of sugar found in alcohol can lead to glycation, which has been proven to hinder collagen fibers."

“The high levels of sugar found in alcohol can lead to glycation, which has been proven to hinder collagen fibers from regenerating.”

Dr. Goldfaden explains. And if you guessed that slowed collagen regeneration is something you want to avoid bringing about if you can, you're right. "This is what leads the skin to wrinkle and sag." But aside from glycation, there's also the immediate effects of tying one on you've got to worry about. "Drinking is bad for the skin primarily because of its dehydrating effects," Dr. Michael Diaz told us. "Excessive drinking can also lead to liver damage, which can cause pigmentation issues and very unsightly blood vessels." To top that all off, alcohol consumption saps the skin of vitamin A—and that, points out Dr. Stafford Broumand, is a decidedly bad thing. "This lowers the rate of skin cell turnover and decreases the skin's ability to fight free radicals, which play a large part in aging," he said. "The key to drinking alcohol is sipping water simultaneously, keeping in mind that moderation is always best."



GETTING IT BACK

If you have done things the wrong way in the past, don't lose hope. A good routine now won't necessarily undo past damage, but it will help to stop its visible signals from rearing their ugly heads. "I have seen so many people prevent damage from becoming visible by staying dedicated to a potent daily regimen," says Dr. Goldfaden. "With regular exfoliation, and regular use of a serum rich in peptides and antioxidants followed by the appropriate moisturizer, you can keep your skin looking healthy for longer." And when it comes time to choose that peptide-rich, antioxidant-packed serum, Dr. Broumand points out, you'd be wise to make sure you're looking for something that also contains a melanocyte-suppressant, like kojic acid, azelaic acid or hydroquinone. "This will further help to minimize sun damage," he explained. If you ask us, we'll take a serum that does it all, like SkinMedica TNS Essential Serum. Definitely not the least expensive serum on the market, but it's one of the most complete, and it comes highly recommended by our medical director, Dr. Ashley Magovern. "I always come back to this one in my rotation of skin care products," she admitted. "It's one of the most complete skin rejuvenation products on the market. In addition to growth factors, it contains peptides, antioxidants like vitamin C, vitamin E, CoQ10 and green tea extracts, plus skin-brightening agents and collagen stimulators." Full disclosure? One thing this superproduct does not contain is retinol, which, if you ask Dr. Broumand, proves a vital part of the damage-control equation. "Many people are frightened by retinol, but it's come a long way," he remarked. "Dermaquest's Retinol Youth Brightening Serum is a brilliant product that includes kojic acid, Vitamin C and Alpha Arbutin to treat pigmentation and brighten the skin. It's perfect for those fighting age, tone and pigmentation."

