

Skin Care News & Notes

High Tech Ways To Treat Acne

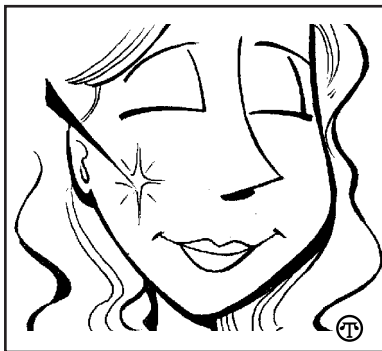
(NAPSA)—A number of people looking to clear up their acne have seen the light—and the results have been significant. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently authorized the use of laser and light-based devices for acne treatment.

By administering a series of gentle laser/light treatments in the office, dermatologic surgeons are observing up to a 90 percent clearance of acne lesions in some patients with persistent inflammatory acne.

As many as four out of five people are affected by acne at some point in their life, most commonly in adolescence. The condition can range in severity from the occasional blackhead or pimple to vast patches of red, inflamed skin or deep lumps and cysts. While not a life-threatening condition, acne can be upsetting and disfiguring. When severe, acne can lead to serious and permanent scarring. Even less severe cases can lead to scarring.

The noninvasive laser/light-based treatments for acne are relatively simple and take about 30 minutes. The skin-care specialist numbs or cools the affected area to reduce discomfort, and then aims a laser beam or specially filtered light over the acne lesions. Visible clearing of acne occurs in a few days following treatment.

Experts are not yet certain why laser treatment improves acne,



A noninvasive laser treatment is now used to treat acne.

but they believe the thermal effects of therapy are either altering the sebaceous glands where acne lesions occur or eliminating the type of bacteria thought to be the primary cause of inflammatory acne or both. Early clinical studies show that any area of the body should respond favorably to treatment, but common test areas are the face, neck, chest and back. Also, the high-tech devices appear to work well on patients of all skin types. In most cases, the dermatologic surgeon will recommend a series of treatments over the course of several weeks to achieve optimal acne clearance.

Although acne is generally thought to be a teenage ailment, it strikes at any age. It normally goes away on its own sometime in the early twenties. However, acne can persist into the late twenties or thirties or even beyond. Some

people may get acne for the first time as adults. In many cases, hereditary factors play a large role in whether a person will suffer from prolonged acne.

Until now, topical and oral treatments were the primary acne-fighting options for most patients. While generally effective, these drugs can have drawbacks. Topical medications such as benzoyl peroxide or retinoids usually need to be applied several times a day.

Oral antibiotics require daily compliance and can take several weeks until improvement is visible. Isotretinoin (trade name Accutane), the most powerful oral acne medication available today, remains the treatment of choice for severe cystic acne but may cause severe side effects in certain patients.

As the pioneers in laser/light technology, dermatologic surgeons are recognized as experts in this new treatment approach for acne. As specialists in the health and beauty of skin, dermatologic surgeons are also uniquely qualified to evaluate specific skin conditions and recommend appropriate, effective solutions.

For more information about laser/light-based acne therapy, and to locate a qualified dermatologic surgeon, visit the Web site www.aboutskinsurgery.org or call the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery at 1-800-441-2737 (ASDS).