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DONNA PACE, RHN, CERTIFIED ESTHETICIAN

insider secrets

Q At 43, I'm getting age spots on my hands already. What causes this, can I get rid of them, and is there any way to prevent getting more?

– Jennifer, Victoria, B.C.

A Dear Jennifer,
Age spots are a result of sun damage over time. Depending on how much sun exposure and how light your skin colour is, it would not be unusual for them to appear at age 43. The sun damages the melanocytes, which are the cells that produce melanin in our skin to protect us from the sun's harmful rays.

Start by avoiding the sun, other than small doses to get your vitamin D, and use lots of sun protection, especially when driving your car; most damage is caused by rays that penetrate the windows. Car windows don't block out UVA light that causes sun damage and aging. For spots that are already present, try using a cream that contains natural lightening agents such as kojic acid, licorice and mulberry extracts. Vitamin C is also helpful. For larger, stubborn spots, you may want to look into IPL (intense pulse light) treatments. Be sure to have a dermatologist check these out first. Also, eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables high in antioxidants such as vitamin A, E, selenium and especially vitamin C.

Q I notice that there are some lines on my fingernails that do not look very attractive. Is there anything I can do to help minimize them?

– Jasmine, Ottawa, Ont.

A Dear Jasmine,
Vertical lines on fingernails can often be a sign of poor absorption of vitamins and minerals, and sometimes simply just a sign of aging. Lines can be vertical or horizontal for different reasons, so you may want to seek the help of a health professional to rule out any underlying issues.

If you are already aware of any digestive issues, you may want to assist the body by taking digestive enzymes prior to your meals, or a tablespoon of apple cider vinegar to help break down the foods so your body can utilize them better. You may also want to supplement with EFAs (essential fatty acids), calcium and silica, as they are essential to healthy nails.

For nail care, I suggest preparing the nails with a primer prior to polish. This will help fill in the lines. Look for formulas that are free from formaldehyde, toluene and DBP to lower your exposure to the toxic chemicals often contained in nail products. ♥



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