

# Men: THINK ABOUT YOUR SKIN HEALTH

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**A**s a dermatology provider, I often see men older than 40 come into the clinic only after something has changed — a new spot of concern, a persistent irritation or sun damage that's become too noticeable to ignore.

The reality is, men should begin prioritizing skin care well before signs of aging/damage appear. Skin should be regarded as a vital organ just as essential to overall health as the heart, lungs or digestive system.

By age 40, the skin begins to show cumulative effects of time and sun exposure. Collagen declines, skin becomes drier, and years of unprotected UV exposure reveals in your skin as age spots, fine lines or actinic keratosis, (precancerous lesions).

Men, in particular, face a higher risk of developing skin cancer, including melanoma, which tends to be diagnosed later and more aggressively in male patients.

For a lot of men skin care is not a top priority, but a good skin care routine doesn't have to be complicated. Cleanse with a gentle, nonsoap face wash. Moisturize daily to maintain the skin barrier. At night, consider a retinol-based product to boost cell turnover and reduce fine lines. And exfoliate once or twice a week to prevent buildup and dullness.

If there's one non-negotiable, it's sunscreen.

Sunscreen should be as routine as brushing your teeth. Daily use of a broad-spectrum SPF 30 or higher applied every morning — yes, even on cloudy days — is essential for preventing both visible aging and skin cancer. I often recommend a moisturizer with built-in SPF. It's a simple way to protect the skin without adding extra steps. Don't forget the ears, neck and scalp.

## CHECK YOUR SKIN

Monthly self-skin checks are crucial. Look for new or changing spots, especially those that itch, bleed, change shape or don't heal. And please don't skip your annual full-body skin exam. Dermatology providers can catch concerns early when they're easiest to treat. Early detection saves lives — plain and simple.

Caring for your skin is an act of preventive health. The earlier you start, the better the results.

