The Secrets of YOUTHFUL SKIN
The human skin is the largest organ in the body. It serves as a vital protective barrier between the body's internal organs from the external environment. The key functions of the skin include temperature regulation, sensory perception and defense mechanism against infections. The basic structure of the skin consists of two distinct layers which are the superficial epidermis and deeper dermis.

We live in a competitive and fast-paced society where a youthful and healthy appearance is coveted as much as wealth. Ageing is however a process that affects all organs of the human body. Intrinsic ageing is determined by genetic make-up, but the extrinsic factors of ageing skin include sun exposure, smoking, alcohol, pollution and stress including frequent muscle contractions such as frowning and squinting.

The ageing skin is prone to dryness, thinning, sagging, age spots and wrinkles. The influence of solar UV radiation from sun exposure is profound and account for 80-90% of skin damage related to ageing.

It breaks down the collagen and elastin fibres within the dermis, resulting in wrinkles. It also hastens the production of melanin which results in pigmentation. Apart from that, hormonal changes, deterioration of the bony infrastructure of the face and the law of gravity, can result in drooping eyelids, sunken cheeks and jowls.

Remedial and protective measures include the use of broad spectrum sunscreens with both UVA and UVB protection. The recommended SPF is 30 to 50, used 3 to 4 hourly, throughout the day. The use of cosmeceuticals containing hydroxy acids to enhance exfoliation and retinoids to stimulate collagen production is beneficial. A healthy low fat diet rich in vitamins A, C, E and antioxidants when combined with regular exercise, adequate sleep and sufficient water intake daily, works wonders for the skin.

For those seeking skin rejuvenation and enhancement of beauty, doctors at medical facilities currently provide anti-aging therapies such as soft tissue augmentation, Botoxum Toxin (Type A) injections, laser therapy, microdermabrasion, chemical peels and skin tightening procedures.

Although ageing is a fact of life, healthy skin and a youthful appearance improve the self-confidence and general well-being of an individual.

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