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## Wellness PROFILE

### Gary Goldfaden, MD

Pioneering a Natural Approach to Skin Care

By Sue Kovach



When Dr. Gary Goldfaden entered the dermatology field more than 25 years ago, the specialty's primary focus was treating skin diseases, cancers, and common skin problems. As a self-described "people person," he was drawn to the field by his desire to help patients with skin conditions that, because of their outward visibility, often cause great distress and anxiety. Unlike surgeons who spend little time talking with their patients, Dr. Goldfaden made a priority of communicating with his patients. He believed that if he could practice dermatology and communicate equally well, he would accomplish his goals as a physician.

#### TAKING A "WHOLE HEALTH" APPROACH

In the last decade, dermatology's focus has turned to cosmetic procedures such as Botox® injections, laser resurfacing, and skin peels. These procedures typically involve the use of toxic topical agents. Dr. Goldfaden, who himself strives to live a healthy lifestyle, wondered whether natural agents could produce results equal to those seen in such procedures. He began investigating the use of natural agents and a "whole health" approach to skin care, believing it would benefit his patients who wished to stave off the visible signs of aging, but who feared procedures and chemicals.

"I've made my practice one of prevention and restoration, as well as treating skin disease proactively," says Dr. Goldfaden, who practices at Academy Dermatology in Hollywood, FL.

"For years, I've followed a healthy lifestyle and proper diet," he explains. "As I've aged, I've added more supplements to my daily regimen and have avoided environmental and other toxins. I believe that appropriate diet, nutrients, and supplements, coupled with avoidance of smoking and damaging environmental factors such as prolonged sun exposure, contribute to one's outer health and beauty. To be healthy on the outside, you must be healthy inside."

The skin is the body's envelope and largest organ, notes Dr. Goldfaden, who also has served as a clinical instructor in the Department of Dermatology at the University of Miami School of Medicine. Skin is constantly replenishing itself and tends to renew itself every 28 days. Over the years, Dr. Goldfaden learned how nutrients and supplements work internally in the body. He then began to consider the cycle of skin renewal and how topical nutrients could nourish the skin during this process.



"Skin looks better if the cells on the surface are newer," says Dr. Goldfaden. "If we exfoliate—which is the process of removing old skin cells on the surface by mechanical or chemical means—it markedly enhances skin appearance. I realized that exfoliation would allow nutrients and phytochemicals to work on new skin cells as they matured. Going a step further, I considered which nutrients applied to fresh skin might benefit underlying conditions, and began to use them for the cosmetic aspect of dermatology, without invasive procedures."

#### TOPICAL ANTIOXIDANTS BENEFIT SKIN HEALTH

For the past 10 years, Dr. Goldfaden has developed and tested targeted nutrient and phytochemical products to help his patients—and now the public—with skin problems and daily care. He formed Cosmesis Skin Care, through which he has also created special formulas for Life Extension members. The products have been well received, as consumers today are seeking dermatologist-developed formulas backed by scientific research.

According to Dr. Goldfaden, "You can now achieve effective results using natural antioxidant skin care products rather than

aggressive, invasive procedures or toxic chemical agents.”

Tea extracts provide the foundation for Dr. Goldfaden’s skin care formulations. Through research and personal experience, he has found that tea is beneficial both when taken internally and applied externally. Teas contain potent natural antioxidants such as flavonoids, alpha hydroxy acids, and polyphenols. Using tea-based products in his practice, Dr. Goldfaden learned that tea’s constituents combine to improve the skin’s health and appearance.

“Patients using tea-based products have healthier-looking skin, suffer less damage from environmental factors, and get better results with other topical agents used for specific problems,” he says.

Exfoliation is the first step to healthy skin. Using tea-based scrubs and microdermabrasion products to expose new skin allows for better absorption of topically applied nutrients. Most people can exfoliate once a day for a minute or two, unless they have especially dry or sensitive skin, according to Dr. Goldfaden.



## TOPICAL TREATMENTS, COMPARABLE RESULTS

Treatments combining exfoliation with tea-based products can be used for a variety of conditions and in lieu of many cosmetic procedures, such as Botox® for wrinkle reduction, filler injections, and skin-resurfacing peels and lasers. Dr. Goldfaden says the results achieved are similar to those from cosmetic procedures.

“You see immediate improvement with cosmetic procedures, or within one to five days,” he says. “Topical nutrients take a little longer, typically four to six weeks, to produce visible results. But if you compare a chemical face-peel patient to someone who used natural exfoliation, the two people would probably look the same. The results won’t be comparable to those of a face lift, but they will be similar to the results of a superficial procedure such as face peel.”

Dr. Goldfaden does not oppose the use of cosmetic procedures and in fact performs them himself. He believes such procedures and natural products can work together to produce the best and healthiest skin results. Topical nutrients can potentiate and maximize the effect of procedures so the results last longer, he says.

“Additionally, people who fear procedures or who can’t afford them can treat themselves topically, and they will see similar results over time,” he explains.

## FORMULATING CUSTOMIZED SKIN CARE SOLUTIONS

Wrinkles caused by facial expressions can be treated with Botox® injections costing from \$300 to \$1,000 per treatment. However, consumers can use Cosmesis Ultra Wrinkle Relaxer for a fraction of the price and see good results while avoiding the possible side effects of Botox®.

“Wrinkles are caused by the continual contraction of muscles stretching the skin,” Dr. Goldfaden explains. “People who smoke, eat a poor diet, and have prolonged sun exposure have more wrinkles. Botox® relaxes facial-expression wrinkles by paralyzing the underlying muscle. Ultra Wrinkle Relaxer instead weakens the muscles’ contraction to make wrinkles less prominent. The wrinkle-relaxing agent, acetyl hexapeptide-3, is non-toxic and safe.”

Fine lines around the eyes are also caused by frequent muscle contraction. The thinner skin in this area is greatly affected by the external environment, particularly sun exposure. Dr. Goldfaden addresses these wrinkles with Cosmesis Rejuvenating Serum, containing a super-concentrated tea blend and hyaluronic acid, the active ingredient in the prescription filler Restylane®.

“Hyaluronic acid is a water-binding substance that absorbs water from surrounding tissue and holds the skin structure, making wrinkles look less defined,” explains Dr. Goldfaden. “The Cosmesis product called Fine Lineless helps in this area as well.”



Dark circles under the eyes, commonly referred to as “allergic shiners,” often have little to do with allergies, says Dr. Goldfaden. They can be caused by inadequate blood drainage from the superficial vessels under the eyes. Blood backs up into the lymphatic system, releases enzymes into the skin, and starts breaking down the tissue. Broken red blood cells under the skin cause the dark appearance.

“Cosmesis Under Eye Refining Serum and Under Eye Rescue Cream target the cause of swelling and dark circles,” he explains.

“Both contain a combination of soy and rice bran peptides that reduce venous blood clotting and can increase blood supply to superficial tissues, increasing the natural firmness of the skin. An antioxidant tea blend diminishes free radicals, reducing inflammation to minimize puffiness and wrinkling around the eyes.”



Hyperpigmentation is one of the most common problems that bring patients to Dr. Goldfaden's office. Patches of skin become darker in color due to excessive melanin, the pigment that produces skin color. Types of hyperpigmentation include sun spots, which result from cumulative sun exposure; melasma, which arises primarily in women due to hormonal causes; and post-inflammatory hyper-pigmentation, which arises from an injury or insult to the skin. While these conditions are conventionally treated with toxic topical agents such as hydroquinone, natural agents may also be helpful in managing them.

“Plant-derived agents such as alpha arbutin and kojic acid have been found to be beneficial in lightening skin and evening its coloration,” says Dr. Goldfaden. “Cosmesis Pigment Correcting Cream, which combines alpha arbutin and concentrated tea antioxidants, has been beneficial for many forms of increased pigmentation, especially those affecting larger areas of skin. For smaller areas, Cosmesis Skin Lightening Serum can be used. Use of sunscreens is also essential to prevent repigmentation.”

Other conditions, such as rosacea and acne, can also benefit from topical nutrients, says Dr. Goldfaden.

### HEALTHY SKIN FOR A LIFETIME

The wide array of natural skin care products available today is no longer indicated just for women. Men are now taking an interest in skin care, and today the market for men's products is growing by leaps and bounds.

“The skin of men and women is similar, and skin care products don't have to be gender-specific,” he explains. “Life Extension products employ a unisex approach that can help all people with skin anti-aging and rejuvenation, regardless of their sex or age.”

The trend of the future, says Dr. Goldfaden, is to begin proper skin care early in life to preserve its youthfulness and decrease the effects of aging. A new segment of the skin care market, targeting people aged 25 to 40, is growing fast.

“The sooner skin care and nourishment begins, the less likely you'll notice the effects of aging,” says Dr. Goldfaden. “Early preventive measures, combined with sun avoidance and not smoking, fit into the healthy lifestyle that is the Life Extension concept. This leads to beautification, health, and nutrition of the skin, while nurturing respect for the mind and body.”



*Gary Goldfaden, MD, a clinical dermatologist and lifetime member of the American Academy of Dermatology, is founder of Academy Dermatology in Hollywood, FL, and COSMESIS Skin Care. He is also a member of the Life Extension Scientific Advisory Board.*

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