

BUSINESS STYLE

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Skin problems had plagued Karen M. most of her life, beginning with acne in adolescence and later with large pores, rosacea, an uneven skin tone, and hyperpigmentation. "People used to stare, and it attacked my self-esteem," she says.

Now she says her attitude toward her skin, and subsequently her self-esteem, has completely turned around thanks to Ann E. Lott, MD, board certified dermatologist, and Pam Peterson, licensed aesthetician, of Cosmetic Dermatology & Laser Center (CDLC).

Karen's journey to attractive skin and a confident appearance is due to a variety of treatments from Pam and Dr. Lott, including the Fractional CO2 Laser. Dr. Lott explains, this advanced form of laser treatment clears sun-damaged skin, smoothes fine lines and wrinkles, shrinks pores, fills in acne scars, and blends uneven pigmentation. She adds that the Fractional CO2 Laser can also treat scarring caused by burns and accidents.

The trade name of the Fractional CO2 Laser is Pixel Perfect. One pulse of the Pixel Perfect Laser creates thousands of microscopic perforations, known as micro-wounds, to the first and second layers of the skin. "It looks like somebody with a ruler took a sewing needle and poked little holes in the skin at regular intervals," Dr. Lott says. The skin surrounding the micro-wounds is left intact, which promotes more rapid healing.

Before microwounding, doctors used laser resurfacing to achieve similar results. Laser resurfacing removes the entire top layer of skin and creates one large wound, however, Dr. Lott points out. "So you (the patient) looked like you'd been working on a gas furnace and you had a flare-up," she states. With the old type of laser resurfacing, the skin's fiery red appearance typically lasts several weeks, even months.

Patients who undergo a Pixel Perfect Laser treatment can expect some redness similar to that of a sunburn but not nearly as severe as with laser resurfacing. The recovery time is also shorter at about four days, which is down from two weeks expected with laser resurfacing, Dr. Lott says. This means that a patient can have the treatment on a Thursday and return to work by the following Monday, for example.

Karen says she experienced very little discomfort during and after the Pixel Perfect treatment. "Dr. Lott is very careful about pain and sensitivity to it," she states. A numbing cream was applied to her skin approximately 45 minutes beforehand. During the procedure, she was aware of the laser moving over her face, but it was not painful. Her at-home treatment regimen stressed keeping the skin moist and cool with an ointment. She also applied cool compresses of white vinegar and water.

Depending on the individual, improvement to the skin's appearance occurs gradually over time and with the number of laser treatments required. Dr. Lott says some patients may only need one treatment, while others may need three or four. Karen underwent four treatments for her skin, and says she is extremely happy with the results.

Another state-of-the-art skin treatment CDLC offers its patients is the Melanage MiniPeel. This particular peel helps reduce fine lines and wrinkles and targets brown spots known as hyper-

pigmentation, Dr. Lott explains. "The brown discoloration (of the skin) seems to be such a battle for so many people." She adds that researchers believe some people have a genetic tendency to this particular skin problem. "Now we seem to have a peel that finally is giving us more response to dealing with this issue," she states.

The peel is a combination of weak acids and potent non-acidic ingredients that do not burn, wound, or injure the skin. For this reason, the peel is also ideal for patients with darker complexions.

The first step in the treatment process is to cleanse the skin. Pam says she uses special degreasing pads to remove oils and makeup residue. Next, she applies the peel solution. The patient is instructed to leave the peel solution on for up to four hours, at which point it can be washed off using the cleanser provided in the home treatment kit. Also included in the kit is an emollient moisturizer to help with dryness, because as Pam states, "They (the patient's skin) will start peeling within a few days." Pam also provides a sunscreen and a compounded night cream, which consists of liquid Vitamin A and a bleaching solution. The night cream helps promote flaking of the skin.

A patient can expect that most of the peeling and/or flaking will occur within the first week after the peel treatment, but occasional flaking will continue within a 60-day period, Pam says. This is due to the use of the compounded night cream. "The peel treatment jump-starts the correction of the pigmentation, and the cream that is used at home continues that treatment on a lesser strength," she explains.

Some patients will notice improvement after one peel treatment, however, two, three, or even four peel treatments may be required over a period of one year to resolve a brown pigmentation problem.


The Melanage MiniPeel is not painful, Pam says, and there is not any stinging while the solution is on the face. "For the patient, it's certainly easier than a lot of our other treatments," Dr. Lott adds.

Brown pigmentation occurs with the skin's aging process as a result of hormonal changes due to pregnancy, the use of birth control pills, and/or the skin's response to injury.

Karen N. says she noticed some slight age spots forming on her skin and didn't like the look of them. As a patient of Dr. Lott's and Pam's for almost 10 years, Karen had been vigilant with her skin care. "I've taken the time and effort to take care of my skin," she says. She adds that she has benefited immensely from Dr. Lott's and Pam's knowledge.

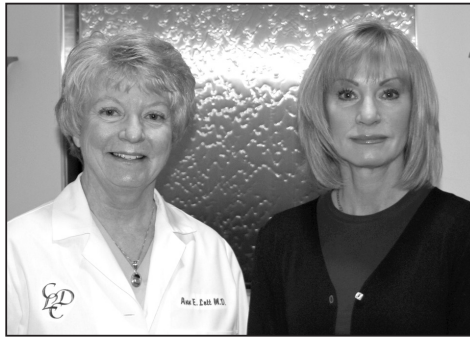
So when the brown pigmentation started forming, Karen knew who to consult. She underwent just one peel treatment with Pam, probably because she had spent so many years taking good care of her skin, she says. That one treatment resolved the brown pigmentation problem, and she says that she couldn't be more pleased.

Dr. Lott and Pam stress taking care of one's skin, mainly by using sunscreen daily and reapplying it every two hours. This is vital to preventing skin problems and having great skin, even if the person doesn't plan on spending much time outside, they add.

Cosmetic Dermatology & Laser Center is located at 2900 South 70th Street, Suite 450. For more information, call 483-1111 or visit www.cosmeticdermatologylincoln.com. 

COSMETIC DERMATOLOGY & LASER CENTER

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