



Caring For Your Skin



Winter 2020-21

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Welcome to the latest issue of the **Caring For Your Skin** Newsletter. In this issue, I address:

- 1) *Covid-19 Virus Update*
- 2) *Covid-19 vaccine side-effect in filler patients*
- 3) *Winter Itch*
- 4) *Regular exercise can lower the risk of developing cancer*

Covid-19 Virus Update



Since my past two newsletters on Covid-19 much has happened. More people in the US and worldwide have been infected and the death toll grows. We are currently experiencing a surge in new cases and recently a more infectious strain of Covid-19 has been identified in the US and abroad.

However, the good news is that vaccination programs are underway. Currently in the US there are two approved vaccines (Pfizer, Moderna). Both vaccines require two shots, 3 to 4 weeks apart. Both vaccines work by triggering a non-infectious Covid-19 protein to be made in our cells to generate antibodies against that protein to protect us from infection. In trial studies both vaccines are about 95% effective in generating these antibodies. How long lasting the protection will last is uncertain. Children are not yet authorized to receive the Pfizer (if under 16) or Moderna (if under 18) vaccine. Fortunately, children are less likely to have serious Covid-related consequences.

Side effects of the vaccine have included pain in 84-92%, swelling at the injection site in 10-25% and redness at the site in around 10% of vaccinated people. The second (booster) vaccination is more likely to cause these side effects. Mild flu-like symptoms also frequently occur. There have been reports of more serious allergic like reactions (anaphylaxis), shortly after receiving the vaccine that has prompted advising patients, particularly those that have had severe allergic reactions in the past, to be aware and be monitored for at least 30 minutes after receiving the vaccine.

Click here for information (as of December 2020) on Pfizer's <https://www.fda.gov/media/144414/download> and Moderna's vaccine <https://www.fda.gov/media/144638/download>

In December Covid-19 vaccination programs began in Rutland. Those vaccinated first were front-end health care workers like emergency room personnel, and other providers caring for

patients that are or may be infected with Covid-19. Other health care providers and nursing home workers and residents will follow. Then people with underlying health issues and older people along with “essential” workers key to societal functioning such as teachers, police officers, fire fighters, prison guards and grocery store workers. Young healthy people will likely be included in the final phase. Hopefully the vaccinations will protect us from Covid-19 infection and by the end of the year our lives will be returning to the pre-pandemic days.

Here is a link to the latest information on Covid-19 in Vermont: <https://vtdigger.org/coronavirus/>

Unusual Covid-19 vaccine side-effect in filler patients



Patients who have received hyaluronic acid fillers (e.g., Restylane and Juvederm families of fillers) should be aware that during the testing of Moderna’s Covid-19 vaccine, shortly after receiving the vaccine, three recipients who had hyaluronic acid filler treatment developed facial or lip swelling in the areas where they had received the filler. Two of the patients had fillers in their cheeks within the six months prior of receiving the vaccine, while the third patient had filler injected in the lip two days after receiving the vaccine. All three reactions were transient and either resolved without or with simple treatment. It is uncertain whether or not there is a direct relationship to the vaccine or if the reaction was coincidental.

These Moderna trial instances and other case reports of similar filler reactions, unrelated to Covid-19 vaccination, suggest that these reactions occur more frequently in Juvederm treated patients (Volbella, Voluma, Vollure, Ultra). These Juvederm “Vycross gel” products are produced differently from other hyaluronic acid products.

During my 17 years of treating patients with hyaluronic acid fillers I have had only two patients that had a delayed swelling reaction, similar to these Moderna Covid-19 vaccination patients. Both were treated uneventfully. It appears that both of these patients developed a sensitivity reaction to the filler itself and there was no known triggering event, such as a vaccination. Other dermatologists have similarly reported these reactions, sometimes months after filler treatment and it is thought that there may or may not be triggering factors such as a dental cleaning, viral infection or vaccination.

So, should a patient who has received filler treatment avoid getting the Covid-19 vaccine? Absolutely not. The risk of Covid-19 related illness far outweighs the very low risk of developing a transient and easily treatable reaction to filler. If you have ever had filler treatment and think that you might be having such a reaction (swelling, redness, and (or) tenderness), call the office without delay so that we can expeditiously address the problem.

Winter Itch



Is your skin getting dry this winter? Has it started to itch, crack and get red in places? If so you may have “winter itch”, also known as “winter eczema”. This is a form of eczema (also called dermatitis) brought on by cold weather. Cold air holds very little moisture and heating our houses and workplaces dries out the air even more. Being surrounded by dry air, day after day, dries out our skin. The older we get the drier our skin becomes and we become more susceptible to winter eczema. Long hot baths or showers, frequent bathing and harsh detergents can all contribute to the development of dry itchy skin by removing some of the natural oils from our skin that help moisturize it.

There are a number of things that you can do to make your skin better.

- 1) Take fewer baths or showers. Limit your bathing to no more than once every day or two.
- 2) Limit the temperature of the water in which you shower or bath. Hot water dries out the skin more than warm water.
- 3) Limit the duration of your bath, shower or time in a hot tub. Shorter times dry out your skin less than longer times.
- 4) Use mild moisturizing soaps (e.g., unscented Dove (my favorite)), Eucerin Eczema Relief cream body wash, shea butter body wash (Olay, Equate), Cetaphil soap, Oil of Olay, Basis). Avoid scented soaps (e.g., Irish Spring, Zest, Coast) and Ivory soap.
- 5) When towel drying blot your skin with the towel gently rather than vigorously rubbing your skin with it.
- 6) Apply a skin moisturizer to your skin after each bath or shower (e.g., Eucerin, Vaseline, Lubriderm, Moisturel). For wintertime dry skin we highly recommend “**In Shower Body Lotion**”. NIVEA is our favorite brand. Other brands include *Oil of Olay* that is available in local stores and at Amazon.com. You rub it on your skin at the end of your shower, briefly rinse off and pat-dry. It traps the moisture in your skin and is more comfortable to apply while still in the warm shower.
- 7) For extra-dry skin try the following preparations: Epilyte, Amlactin or 10-25% urea (e.g., Carmol 20, Ultramide 25). These may burn at first if placed on skin with deeper cracks.
- 8) If you swim or use a hot tub during the winter months, rinse off with warm water after you get out of the pool or tub and then apply a general skin moisturizer to your skin.
- 9) Avoid wearing itchy clothes (e.g., wool clothing).
- 10) Get a humidifier for you home, or at least one for your bedroom.
- 11) Try to avoid scratching your itchy skin as this makes it worse.
- 12) If the above measures are not sufficient to get your dry itchy skin under control, you can try over the counter anti-itch creams (e.g., Sarna, hydrocortisone) and (or) over the counter anti-itch pills (e.g., Benadryl).
- 13) For more severe dry skin I sometimes prescribe prescription strength medicated creams and anti-itch pills. As the dry itchy skin improves with these medications, they can be stopped but the above recommendations should continue to be followed to prevent the problem from worsening again.
- 14) If your skin doesn't get better with the above measures you should be reevaluated to determine if you have another condition that is causing your dry itchy skin. Sometimes a skin biopsy is required to determine the cause.

Anti-cancer effects of exercise



We all know that regular exercise is good for us. It helps control our weight, boost our mood & energy levels, promotes better sleep and has many other health benefits. In a previous newsletter I discussed how exercise releases a hormone called irisin that helps burn fat, may increase your longevity and lower the risk of developing breast cancer.

<http://www.rutlandskin.com/Newsletter-Summer%202015.pdf>

The [National Cancer Institute now estimates](#) that regular vigorous physical activity can significantly reduce the risk of cancer:

breast, endometrial (uterine) and esophageal cancer by up 21%,
colon and stomach cancer by 19%,
bladder cancer by 15%,
and renal (kidney) cancer by 12%.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that one in 10 premature deaths are related to inadequate physical activity.

Researchers continue to study the beneficial effects of exercise and currently think that exercise can trigger the release of beneficial substances like irisin that have anti-inflammatory and other beneficial effects like strengthening the immune system. It also helps prevent obesity that is associated with a higher risk of cancer and other medical problems. So do your health a favor and engage in a regular exercise program if you are able. Start slowly and check with your doctor for clearance if you have serious health issues. In general, moderate to vigorous walking along with a few days of muscle strength and stretching activities are recommended.



[Click here for advice on exercise routines, adjusted for health status, and age.](#)

And don't forget the other things that can help you lead a longer and healthier life.

<http://rutlandskin.com/Newsletter-Autumn%202010.pdf>

In closing, I hope you found items of interest in this issue of the **Caring For Your Skin** Newsletter. If you are not on the e-mailing list and would like to receive future newsletters via e-mail, or would like to have a particular topic covered in a future newsletter, e-mail your request to C4YSkin@gmail.com



Please keep updated on the coronavirus situation and take precautionary measures.

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