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Linda Simonian, who works under medical director Dr. Lad Rubaum, is a family nurse practitioner with a Masters of Science in nursing. She is respected as an expert and skilled technician with many years' experience with a wide variety of lasers for skin care and beautification. Here, she expounds on the relatively new Pearl laser and its distinct attributes for improving facial skin.

Pearl Laser, Pearly Skin

Laser Treatments that Refresh and Renew the Skin

BENEFITS: Can smooth uneven texture, lighten discolorations, reduce pore size, and reduce fine lines and wrinkles; can boost the effectiveness of everyday skin care products.

Q: Why are you so impressed with the Pearl laser?

A: Cutera™, the maker of the Pearl laser, is known for its very safe, effective lasers. I particularly like the Pearl laser because, with only three to five days social downtime, it completely refreshes the face's skin. Think of your skin as being like a piece of cheese that gets hard around the edges as it gets older. The Pearl removes that hard, dry, crusty layer and brings out healthier skin, like the fresher cheese underneath the dried-up surface.

Q: Doesn't the body object to having a layer of skin removed?

A: Actually, one of the best things about the Pearl is how it uses the body's natural response to make skin healthier and more "pearly," which is how this laser got its name. It vaporizes the top layer with pulses of light, and simultaneously sends heat to the deeper layers of the skin to stimulate collagen production. The body responds by coagulating a natural

dressing on the surface. In three to five days, after it's done its job shielding the skin beneath as it renews itself, the dressing peels away in a process that takes 24 hours. When it's done, the face has a fresh layer of skin.

Q: In what ways does the new skin layer look better?

A: Especially with people who have had a lot of sun damage, the skin has less discoloration and brown spots, and wrinkles and fine lines brought on by too much sun are usually quite reduced. Large pores are usually made smaller, and the new skin has a smoother, more even texture.

Q: How does the Pearl affect your regular skin care routine?

A: During the three to five-day period while the natural dressing does its work, you do not wash the face except with vinegar and water as a gentle antiseptic, then apply Aquaphor™. Once the peeling is complete, you can go back to your normal skincare regimen, making sure to use good sunscreens. I have seen the Pearl enhance the effectiveness of skin care products and maintenance such as facials – I believe they work better because they penetrate bet-

ter. Approximately, one week after the Pearl treatment or once peeling is complete, we offer a complimentary Laser Genesis treatment to decrease any redness that may occur and boost collagen stimulation.

Q: Does everyone respond the same way to the Pearl?

A: Here is an important tip for anyone who is considering laser treatment of any kind: Everyone responds differently. Beware of a pre-set schedule of laser treatments. Recommendations should be made and assessed one treatment at a time. The Pearl is no different in this regard than any other laser. I recently had a couple come in for Pearl treatments. The husband's skin was 100 percent improved and had finished peeling by the third day; his wife's skin looked better, though she could probably use a second treatment, and her skin took five days to refresh itself.

Q: How often can the Pearl laser be used on a patient?

A: One treatment is often enough, although some may benefit from a second treatment, and the Pearl may not be right for every patient. A good laser skin care specialist will assess the client first to determine the best approach.