



WHAT'S YOUR EXIT STRATEGY?



There's so much focus on getting patients into the office, but more attention is needed on how they leave.

BY NAZANIN SAEDI, MD

In today's world of social media and patients wanting to be "selfie" perfect after procedures, there is a lot of concern about downtime. On top of this, they are busy and don't want to cancel work or events to stay out of sight after a treatment. To deliver on expectations, we have incorporated more minimally invasive procedures that have less downtime—such as gentle resurfacing, RF microneedling, and pico treatments. Still, we need to have a good, "Exit Strategy" so patients can be ready to face the day after treatments, while enhancing and protecting their "skin-vestment." In my practice, our patient post-care plan incorporates skincare products and protocols.

SUNSCREEN

All the products I recommend to patients are carefully curated and must accomplish a few key things. First and foremost—and non-negotiable—is sun protection. Not all sunscreens are created equal, and I believe in physical blockers for protecting my patients' skin after procedures. I choose chemical-free all-mineral sunscreens for my patients. Chemical ingredients can irritate vulnerable post-procedure skin, but mineral-based products with zinc oxide and titanium dioxide will not cause irritation. They are safe for humans and marine life, too.

COVER-UP

A second key consideration for my patients is "how they look" when they walk out of my office. Even the minimally invasive procedures I perform can cause temporary redness, dark spots, or bruising. Makeup would typically be my patient's go-to for covering up these common side effects, but makeup can be harmful to the skin, especially post procedure. It can cause irritation, clog pores, or trigger break-

outs. Plus, the brushes and sponges can host bacteria that can increase the risk of infection.

In my office, I apply, in the treatment room, specific products that provide immediate correction but have been tested to be safe to apply on post-procedure skin.

COMFORT

The third consideration is comfort. After procedures, patients can have physical side effects. They may experience burning, stinging, and itching associated with treatments. To address this, I always apply products that include ingredients to soothe and calm the skin. I also make sure that what is applied provides a breathable barrier to keep the skin protected. Making sure the skin is properly hydrated will help to address not only these physical symptoms but also aid dry and peeling skin.

SUPPORTING OUTCOMES

Lastly, but certainly not least, the skincare products I apply and recommend for home use should include ingredients that help to support the outcomes I am trying to achieve with procedures. For example, if I am using the pulsed dye laser for redness, a picosecond laser for pigmentation, or RF microneedling for skin tightening, I want what's in the products to also work on redness, pigment, or rejuvenation, respectively.

PRACTICAL SELECTIONS

One of my secret weapons? The Colorescience Finishing Touch Protocol. In five minutes or less, my patients are ready to face the day rather than hide at home.

The protocol combines products that are designed to correct discoloration, such as redness or brown/dark spots,



The patient is shown immediately following chemical peel (left) and after the Finishing Touch Protocol (right).

address the underlying conditions that contribute to the symptoms, provide chemical-free, broad-spectrum SPF 50 protection, comprehensive protection from blue light, infrared radiation, and pollution, and keep skin hydrated. The specific products I choose for my patients include All Calm Clinical Redness Corrector SPF 50 or Even Up Clinical Pigment Perfector SPF 50, Total Eye 3-in-1 Renewal Therapy SPF 35, Mineral Corrector Palette SPF 20, Total Protection Brush-On Shield SPF 50 (a water resistant, powder sunscreen), Hydrating Mist and Lip Shine SPF 35. We customize the selection based on the patients' skin concerns, treatment performed and needs. It takes my staff five minutes to apply the products in the treatment room, and my patients leave feeling happy.

There are two peer-reviewed studies, both published in the *Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology*, on using the protocol post intense pulsed light (IPL) and a white paper on a multi-center study of the protocol post injectables, IPL, chemical peels, fractional resurfacing, and injectables. In the studies, subjects reported increased comfort from physical symptoms, increased confidence to go out in public, and improvement in their skin concerns. In addition, they had improved procedure perception and stated they were more likely to rebook the procedures. In my office, I apply the protocol after pulsed dye laser, IPL, Aerolase, pico-toning, pico treatments for lentigines, Fraxel, neuromodulators, dermal fillers, and all other non-ablative treatments. The outcomes in my practice mirror what is reported in the studies.

In addition to the Colorescience protocol products, I also use Alastin Skin Nectar. This product is ideal for prepping

skin before treatments as well as enhancing collagen and elastin production. These products complement each other.

Aside from carefully selected skincare products, I strive to deliver a unique experience to every patient. My team and I strive to provide that "white glove" touch for our patients. We spend time learning and listening to them share their skin health and rejuvenation goals with us, we carefully customize our procedures to meet those goals, and we spend a good amount of time educating them on what to expect and setting expectations. As part of our care plan, we always call patients the day after procedures to check on them, answer any questions, and confirm they are following their post-care protocols.

CARE CREATES LOYALTY

When patients trust they can go about their day after procedures, they are more likely to return, less likely to cancel, and are confident to schedule throughout the day versus only at the end of the day. When patients feel listened to and cared for, they and the care team build a relationship that creates loyalty.

I always remember this quote popularly attributed to Maya Angelou: "People will forget what you did, they will forget what you said but they will always remember how you made them feel." To accomplish this, don't just care for patients while they are in your office, care how they look and feel when they leave. ■

NAZANIN SAEDI, MD

■ Director of Jefferson Laser Surgery and Cosmetic Center and an Associate Professor in Dermatology at Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia.