

Ask Val

YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS? OUR BEAUTY DIRECTOR, VALERIE MONROE, HAS ANSWERS.



Q HOW CAN I GET RID OF THE BROKEN CAPILLARIES ON MY FACE?

A: I had broken capillaries, too, and several years ago had them treated with a pulsed dye (V-beam) laser. It left dark purple squiggles on the treated areas (basically, both cheeks) for ten days. I looked, my concerned husband said, as if a glass had exploded on my face. Fortunately, today there are lasers that won't cause "purpura" (meaning they don't leave you temporarily looking like a Jackson Pollock painting). Of these, the newer V-beam and the KTP (Gemini) are the best choices, says Arielle Kauvar, MD, clinical professor of dermatology at NYU Langone Medical Center. They heat the blood vessels, which then collapse and disappear. Two to four treatments may be needed (at about \$400 each). **Keep in mind:** Broken capillaries can be a sign of rosacea; if your dermatologist determines that this is part of your problem, prescription anti-inflammatories such as MetroGel or Finacea (in addition to laser treatment) will help resolve it, says Ellen Marmur, MD, associate professor of dermatology at Mount Sinai Medical Center.

Q Suddenly, my favorite fragrance seems to be giving me hives. What's up with that?

A: What's probably up are your memory T cells, which can react to an allergen days, months, even years after exposure, says Valerie Callender, MD, associate professor of dermatology at Howard University. One of the most common causes of allergic contact dermatitis (ACD) is fragrance ingredients. But don't give up on your perfume just yet; some of these ingredients are also found in skincare

and haircare products and laundry detergents. Decrease your exposure to all scented products, says Paradi Mirmirani, MD, a dermatologist at Kaiser Permanente in Vallejo, California. Then apply your fragrance on the inside of your arm to see if that's what's causing your reaction. **Keep in mind:** A doctor can give you a patch test to determine if you have ACD; if you don't, you may have irritant contact dermatitis, which, though often less serious, can also cause a rash. **Q**

HELP FOR HAIR LOSS

For the many readers who poignantly confide unhappiness about their thinning hair, there's encouraging news, reported in **THE NEW NATURAL: YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CUTTING-EDGE AGE REVERSAL**, a just-released book by dermatologist Neil Sadick, MD. Within the next year or two, several increasingly effective hair-growth-stimulating topical preparations will hit the market, Sadick says. And a recently completed study of an injectable drug, likely available within five years, showed remarkable results after a single treatment, including increased hair density and rapid hair growth that has continued over a 12-month period. Stem cell research, too, is yielding breakthroughs, says Sadick, so the problem of hair loss may sooner rather than later be a thing of the past.

SENSITIVE HANDLING

Because my spirits (and the delicate skin around my eyes) can sometimes use a little lift during the day, I like to keep a tube of **Burt's Bees Sensitive Eye Cream** (\$15; burtsbees.com) in my bag. No bells and whistles here; just cotton extract for softening, rice extract for moisturizing, and a bit of soothing aloe. The crayon-shaped tube makes it easy to dab on and blend (even one-handedly, in case, like me, you sometimes find it hard to ignore the ringing phone that also happens to be in your bag).

