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Top 5 Ways To Prevent and Erase Stretch Marks

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

FOX NEWS

Karlie Pouliot

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Dena Ragusa has worked hard to get her body into shape. About 12 years ago she lost 50 pounds by exercising and eating healthy — but she still wasn't completely happy with the results.

"Even though I feel really good I have these terrible stretch marks," Ragusa said.

"So, I'm kind of limited to the clothing and bathing suits I can wear."

She's not alone. For millions of women and men, stretch marks are an unfortunate part of life.

"These tears occur during periods of considerable fluctuation in weight including pregnancy, bodybuilding, yo-yo dieting and adolescent growth spurts," said Ariel Ostad, a cosmetic and dermatologic [surgeon](#) in New York City.

Dena Ragusa gets ready for her first Fraxel Laser treatment.

"The analogy is similar to a rubber band. If you stretch a rubber band long enough or hard enough, it may not bounce back and that's really what happens in stretch marks," Ostad added.

The good news is that they don't have to be a permanent fixture on your [body](#).

Ostad recommended several treatments to prevent and remove stubborn stretch marks:

1. Prescription Creams — Using Retin A Cream (vitamin A) at the inception of pregnancy, a weight-building program or a growth spurt is essential to keep the [skin](#) hydrated and moisturized. This will help reduce inflammation and stave off the negative effects of the hormones in the skin. This cream, available with a doctor's prescription, also helps remodel the collagen and elastin in the skin and improve its appearance.

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2. Exercise — A balanced exercise program, breathing exercises and meditation help balance hormone levels, especially cortisol, the stress hormone that, if elevated, can cause changes to one's hormonal balance.

3. Diet — While there is no magical food that can help prevent stretch marks, Ostad recommends drinking at least six to eight glasses of non-carbonated water to

flush out toxins and keep the body and skin hydrated as well as consuming skin-boosting fresh (no-sugar-added vegetable juices) leafy greens, lean proteins and omega 3 and 6 oils.

4. [Moisturizing](#) Twice Daily — Keep the entire body moisturized. Choose a moisturizer that is paraffin- and chemical-free and which contains alpha hydroxy and vitamin A.

5. Fraxel Laser Treatments — A non-invasive, FDA-approved laser treatment passes through the top layer of skin like light through glass, reaching into the dermis below to create thousands of tiny, microscopic areas of thermal damage that stimulate the body's wound-healing response, notably new collagen production and replacement of damaged marked skin with new epidermal skin.

Depending on the amount of stretch marks two to three treatments actually reverse and remove stretch marks as well as tighten and tone the skin's texture and pore size.

"Fraxel Laser has no downtime and no side effects. It can also be used to treat and remove melasma, brown spots known as the mask of pregnancy, c-section and acne scars, fine lines, wrinkles and loose skin," Ostad explained.

Ragusa, who recently visited Ostad's practice for her first treatment, is excited to see the final results.

"I'm going to wear a bikini without a skirt," she said.

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Unfortunately, the treatments aren't cheap. The price varies from \$500 to \$1,500 per session.

If you're going to spend that kind of money, Ostad said it's extremely important to do everything you can to keep your skin radiant and [healthy](#).

One way is to drink his skin-boosting juice.

Combine the following ingredients in a juicer and blend:

2 -3 stalks of celery

1 head of lettuce (romaine, or green leaf)

1 bushel of spinach

2 large or 3 small cucumbers

½ lemon

1 small piece ginger

Pour into glass and drink.

Whether you've lost weight like Ragusa or you're trying to bounce back after giving birth, Ostad said it's always important to seek out board-certified [physicians](#) for any prescriptions and or procedures.

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