

YAHOO! SHINE

8 Things Dermatologists Won't Tell You

By [Woman s Day](#) | [Healthy Living](#) – Mon, Sep 17, 2012 5:30 PM EDT

dermatologist examining
patient's skin

By [Alina Dizik](#)

Visiting a dermatologist can do wonders for your skin, but it can also mean you're in store for some surprises. While it's not always the case, some doctors don't offer you all the information they have on treatments and procedures.

"They can't tell you every possible thing that can go wrong because they're short on time and they'll scare you away,"

says Neal Schultz, MD, a New York-based medical and [cosmetic dermatologist](#) and member of the [American](#)

[Academy of Dermatology](#). What might your doc be holding back? Check out the below eight secrets dermatologists

tend to keep to themselves. *Photo by Thinkstock*

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1. Simple mole removals can go wrong.

When it comes to side effects of even the most mundane procedures like removing moles, most dermatologists mention only what's most applicable to the patient, says Dr. Schultz. "Doctors filter out what they think is irrelevant," he says. So your MD

may not prepare you for rare side effects, like contracting flesh-eating staph, which, scary enough, can happen. But there's no reason for concern since most side effects are extremely uncommon, explains Dr. Schultz.

2. Laser treatments aren't perfect.

Although dermatologists tout lasers' benefits, they may not mention some important facts that may make you reconsider treatment. For instance, "laser resurfacing takes longer to recover from than patients expect," says Debra Jaliman, MD, author of [Skin Rules](#) and a member of the American Academy of Dermatologists. Anticipate some oozing and skin discoloration following treatment. And your desired results may not actually appear for as many as 10 days, she says. Plus, using lasers on darker skin can cause long-lasting discoloration.

3. You can (and should!) boost your skin health from home.

It's not all prescriptions and minor skin fixes that can keep your epidermis dandy. Many dermatologists don't tell their patients what they can do outside of the office to help their skin glow. "I like to talk about how diet can contribute to healthy skin," says Dr. Jaliman. What to put on the menu? Munch on fruits and vegetables and drink green tea because they're good sources of antioxidants, which [protect skin from sun damage](#).

4. Predicted procedure results may be better than the final results.

"Some doctors exaggerate procedure benefits," says Dr. Schultz. His office tells patients that results are slightly worse than the projected outcome to manage expectations. In other practices, doctors may say *all* of your wrinkles will disappear after a procedure rather than telling you that 60% improvement is more likely, he explains. Before committing to a procedure, be sure that the [doctor](#) isn't over-promising on the results. If she guarantees a perfect outcome, get a second opinion.

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5. In-office products can make your doctor money.

Those products at the derm's office? They're sometimes another revenue stream for the doctor. "Not all patients are aware that some derms profit off the products sold in their office," says Dr. Jaliman. Still, many items sold at the office are specially formulated and not available elsewhere, she adds. Before taking out your credit card, do a quick Google search to check if the same product is available for less online.

6. Insurance isn't always accepted.

Some dermatology practices, especially those that offer an extensive list of cosmetic procedures, expect you to pay out of pocket before you file your own paperwork for [insurance reimbursement](#). This type of arrangement is becoming more common because it's difficult for medical practices to deal with insurers, says Dr. Schultz, who asks patients to submit their own claims to insurers. "Patients pay us for our service and get reimbursed by insurance for eligible services," he explains. Common treatments for which you'll need to cover the costs: removal of barnacles, skin tags, angiomas (benign skin growths) and milia (deep-rooted white bumps), explains Cynthia Bailey, MD, a [dermatologist](#) in Sebastopol, CA. Check with your insurer that a service you're considering is covered under your plan before you sign up for the procedure.

7. Anti-aging treatments can activate cold sores.

Patients who undergo chemical peels, laser treatments and skin resurfacing may have an unwelcome surprise after the service. "Many people harbor the cold-sore herpes virus around their lips, and treatments can activate it the same way a sunburn or fever can," says Dr. Bailey. But not all doctors warn patients about this potential complication. While the reaction isn't common, it's best to bring up a history of cold sores to your [doctor](#) before treatment. That way, she can prescribe cold-sore prevention medication beforehand, adds Dr. Bailey.

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8. Not all skin experts have the same training.

Even if you think you're seeing a [dermatologist](#), it may not be the case. "Many physician 'skin experts' aren't [dermatologists](#), and it makes a difference in your care," explains Dr. Bailey. Becoming a dermatologist requires five additional years of training and residency, but it's possible for general physicians to focus on skin without those extra years of work, she explains. "It takes this long to become a dermatologist because the skin is that complex," she says. Dig into your doctor's background. If she's not a member of the American Academy of Dermatology, a trade association that counts 98% of U.S. dermatologists as members, it should raise a red flag.

Original article appeared on [WomansDay.com](#).

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