

# allure

THE BEAUTY EXPERT

SPECIAL ISSUE!

## Perfect Skin Rx

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Skin science goes far beyond the treatment of pimples, rashes, and moles. The dermatologist's office is loaded with equipment to fill wrinkles, lighten freckles, and remove or thicken hair. As more women realize this, those who never thought to seek professional skin help before are booking appointments, and dermatologic

### YOU WANT TO TRADE THE RAZOR FOR THE LASER.

Banishing body hair used to involve a 50-cent Lady Schick and a lot of prickly stubble. Now, a single round of high-tech fuzz busting costs about \$500 (and it usually takes three to six rounds for nearly permanent results). Approximately 700,000 women in the United States had laser hair removal last year, according to the ASAPS. And as newer, better lasers become more widely available, experts expect that number to climb. "In the past, we were really able to treat only light skin tones and dark hair effectively," says Tina Alster, director of the Washington Institute of Dermatologic Laser Surgery in Washington, D.C. "But now we have lasers that bypass pigment in the skin, making it safe to treat darker complexions."

### THE SPIDER VEINS ON YOUR LEG HAVE TURNED INTO A WEB.

Sarongs and self-tanner might conceal a tangle of spider veins. But only a doctor can banish them for good. Sclerotherapy, also known as saline or detergent injections, dissolves both tiny veins and thick, ropey varicose ones. It takes three or four treatments (at \$250 to \$1,000 a session, depending on the severity and number of veins being treated), requires the wearing of godawful elastic support hose, and may need to be repeated after several years, but it's still the gold standard.

While dermatologists can zap some veins with lasers, "the ones in the legs may run too deep or be too large for lasers to penetrate," Alster says. (Facial veins, which tend to be thinner and closer to the surface, are perfect victims for lasers.) For the needle-phobic, a newly redesigned version of the GentleYAG laser seems to eradicate leg veins more effectively than its predecessors—though doctors say it's too early to tell just how *much* better.

### YOUR SKIN IS FRECKLED OR MOTTLED.

If a brown blob has taken up residence on your face, you may have melasma—a patch of skin cells whose pigmentation activity is in overdrive, usually as a result of sun exposure, birth control pills, or pregnancy. A drug-store fade cream will help brighten these areas over a period of months, but while they typically contain 2 percent hydroquinone, a lightening ingredient, prescription versions deliver double that amount for speedier results. Some, such as Lustra and Glyquin, also have glycolic acid to slough away surface cells, along with sunscreen to prevent future discoloration.

Doctors are achieving even more promising results with photodynamic therapy, in which a topical acid called Levulan enhances the potency of laser and IPL treatment. "This works really well for sun spots and generally cleaning up the skin," Alster says. Side effects include occasional peeling and redness, along with something more desirable: an overall tightening of the pores.