

Zein E. Obagi, MD



Dr. Zein Obagi is an internationally renowned dermatologist and educator who founded Obagi Medical Products and more recently ZO Skin Health. Several decades ago, he pioneered new concepts in skin health and rejuvenation that have shaped the modern dermatology and skincare landscape. He also is Director of the Obagi Skin Health Institute in California. Ahead, Dr. Obagi reflects on his career as well as the future of innovations in skin health.

CAN YOU REFLECT ON YOUR CAREER AS A DERMATOLOGIST AND SHARE ANY PEARLS YOU'VE LEARNED OVER YOUR JOURNEY?

When I started my private clinic in San Diego, I was very excited, as I would be my own boss and practice the specialty that I loved. Like any other dermatologist in the country, I never have thought that I would be any different from any other dermatologist. This was in 1981, at that time there were primitive lasers, limited knowledge about peels (TCA, phenol), and the concept of skin rejuvenation as we know it now, did not exist. There were also many restrictions on what could be done to African American skin or Asian skin in terms of peels, dermabrasion, correcting scars, damaged skin texture or pigmentary skin problems. Treatment was limited to topical creams and exfoliation, with a high rate of treatment failure. What was even more frustrating was that there were no standards for any dermatological treatment, and trial and errors were common. That was the reason for our variable results; some patients improve, some not so much, with a high rate of treatment failure. In 1982, I started my clinical research in order to improve my treatment results, and create some sort of standard to be followed and to create a safe and more effective approach to treat ethnic skin (African American, Asian and Hispanic). I created a safe approach on how to refine TCA peels and be able to perform such peel on all skin types. To make my story short: One thing led to another and the science of Skin Health was born and became the gold standard for proper skin treatment.

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GIVEN THE EVOLUTION IN BOTH THE UNDERSTANDING AND TREATMENT OF THE SKIN OVER THE LAST SEVERAL DECADES, WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR HOW THE SKIN IS APPROACHED, UNDERSTOOD, AND RESEARCHED?

I strongly believe that skin health science and skin health restoration are going to be the future of skin treatment and care, replacing the current and outdated skin treatment, focuses on skin surface, symptoms and the disease, with no regard to skin itself as a living organ, healthy or not.

In addition to the benefits of skin health restoration and treatment in treating medical conditions, I also strongly believe that maintaining skin health should be the main objective of non-medical skin care for the public. Doing so will bond the public to a dermatologist and together they can take part in making the decision about

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what daily skin care program each person should have. As current approach to skin care today is no longer valid—marketing influence, disregard to skin type, skin needs, limited benefit of skin surface moisturization that damages skin barrier function that leads to skin sensitivity and no scientific evidence to support many of the claims that they make.

IF YOU COULD DELIVER ONE MESSAGE TO YOUR COLLEAGUES—ESPECIALLY YOUNGER PHYSICIANS—ABOUT SKIN HEALTH, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I advise all my colleagues, especially the younger ones, to add to their knowledge and practice the science of skin health. I know that they are trained well to treat a variety of skin problems, and it will be wise to restore skin health while treating any disease. The results will be better, last longer, and their patients will be with them all their lives. This brings me now to address the ZO[®] Circle of Skin Health.

The ZO Skin Health Circle is the foundation and driving philosophy behind ZO Skin Health, Inc. The ZO Skin Health Circle represents a continuum wherein Therapeutic, Maintenance, Daily Skincare, and Prevention are addressed with skin health as the main objective. ZO[®] products are based on the latest advances in skin therapy technologies with specific protocols to provide comprehensive and continuous skin health solutions for all skin types, genders, and ages. ■

About the Zo Skin Health Circle:

Many of our physician partners support the ZO Skin Health Circle philosophy and utilize the full spectrum of ZO[®] Skin Health and ZO[®] Medical products in optimizing skin health for their patients.

Therapeutic Treatments provided by healthcare professionals using prescribed products and unique protocols to correct medical skin conditions.

Maintenance Designed to prevent reoccurrence of persistent skin problems keeping skin strong and healthy while looking and acting younger.

Daily Skincare Effective daily solutions to help promote cellular function and achieve healthier looking skin.

Prevention Minimize UV damage, prevent DNA damage and protect skin from environmental aggressors to improve overall skin health.

To read the full interview with Dr. Obagi, visit www.practicaldermatology.com.