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COSMETIC TREATMENTS

The ‘Oh By the Way, Doctor’ Question Dermatologists Keep Getting

This add-on uptick isn't necessarily aesthetic-related.

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While things may look a bit different nowadays at **Denver dermatologist Joel Cohen, MD's** office, at the present time, patients are, as he describes it, “so happy to be back.”

“When they are finally in the office, they are literally asking to add things to their appointments more than ever,” he says. “Due to social distancing, we actually have longer scheduled appointments now, so I can often easily accommodate them for things they want to add—even if it requires taking the time to put on topical anesthetic or waiting for a laser to go through the (sometimes long) calibration process if it isn't already turned on and ready to go.”

In several cases, **Dr. Cohen** says, his patients came in for one thing—like a laser, injectable or filler—and asked him to look at a skin lesion that they may have been recently noticing.

“Honestly, in so many of these circumstances, these turned out to be skin cancers. Usually, patients have been aware of it for months, but were often scared to leave the house. Now, that they are resuming some things out of the house, one thing leads to another and an aesthetics-related appointment is also leading to a skin cancer pickup.”

While that may sound like a startling break in a scheduled appointment, **Dr. Cohen** says, in short, skin cancer is incredibly common, and the stats don't lie: One in five Americans will get a skin cancer and more than two people die every hour from a melanoma, according to the Skin Cancer Foundation. The good news: When detected early, the five-year survival rate for melanoma is 99 percent.

The bottom line, **Dr. Cohen** stresses: “Patients should do a monthly self skin exam, and also a yearly dermatology skin check appointment, which is even more important if patients have a personal or family history of skin cancer.”