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GREENBRAE

Dermatology





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We'd love to hear your feedback, so we can continue to improve our service to you.

For questions or comments, please send us an email to contact@gbderm.com

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Patients Can Now Text Us: Klara Launching June 4th, 2024

In an age of instant messaging and on-demand everything, the healthcare industry is catching up with a technology that puts patients at the center of its strategy. Welcome to the era of patient-friendly, HIPAA-compliant texting with Klara at Greenbrae Dermatology – an innovative platform that’s transforming the way our office and patients communicate. With Klara, you can now connect with our staff as easily as texting a friend, all while ensuring the highest level of security for your personal health information.

The Klara Experience Explained

What is Klara, and How Does It Work?

Klara, a HIPAA-compliant patient engagement system, offers seamless and secure two-way communication between you and our office. By leveraging text messages,

images, and web chats, Klara allows you to communicate with your healthcare providers' staff without the long wait times or phone tag.

The system is designed to work with your smartphone, integrating into your daily digital life. You receive a Textable Number, a local area code you recognize, which you can text at your convenience. Messages sent to this number are received directly within the Klara system, ensuring you're never left wondering about the status of your communication.

The Benefits of a Textable Number with Klara

Reduced Hold Times

Never sit on hold again. With Klara's Press to Text feature, you receive a text message in response to your inquiry or request, minimizing the time spent waiting for a live response. No longer do you need to plan your day



around a phone call to the doctor's office.

Enhanced Communication Efficiency

Texting with Klara means streamlined and focused communication. Your messages are directly received by the appropriate member of the clinical staff, which cuts out extraneous time spent relaying your message from person to person in a traditional phone call.

Prompt and Timely Responses

Our practice can now provide you with more prompt and timely care. With the ability to check and respond to messages even between appointments, our staff is always within reach, ensuring your needs are addressed in a timely manner.

Security and Compliance

Klara's top priority is the security and confidentiality of your medical information. The platform is fully compliant with HIPAA regulations, meaning every digital conversation is as secure as an in-office consultation, keeping your personal health information safe.

Connecting with Greenbrae Dermatology via Klara

If you are calling from a cell phone and prefer to securely text with us, you can press 1 to start a conversation.

If you prefer web chat, **visit our website at www.greenbraedermatology.com.**

Upon initiating the conversation, you'll discover a whole new level of patient care. Communicate your concerns, share updates on your condition with photos, ask questions, and schedule appointments—all within the comfortable space of a text or online chat.

An Appointment at Your Fingertips

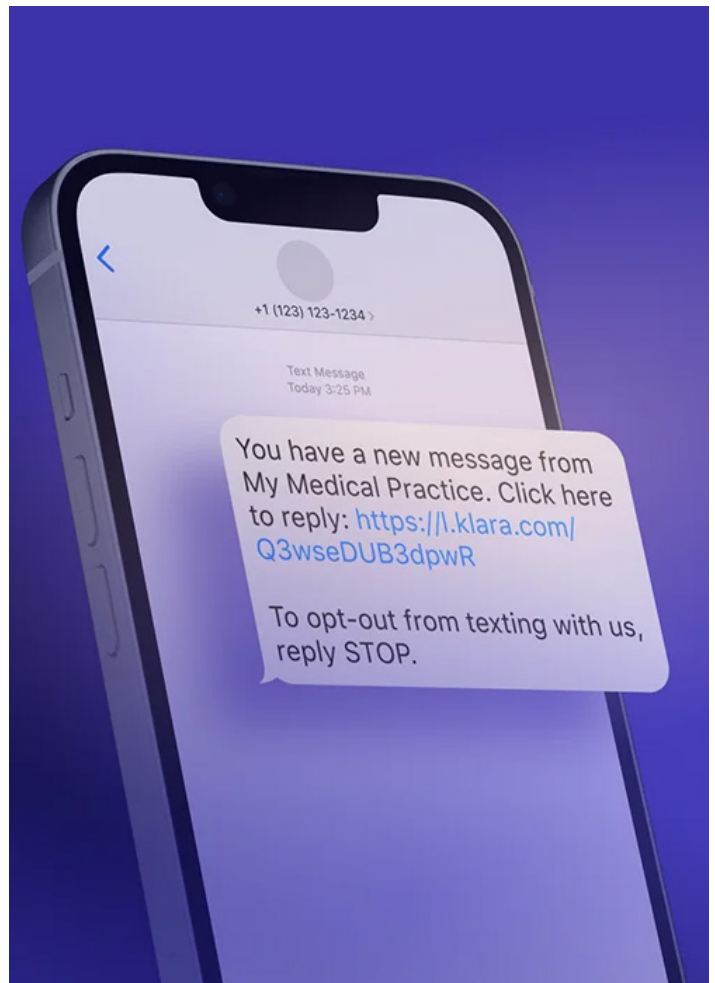
Gone are the days of juggling schedules to make a phone call for an appointment booking. With Klara, it's as simple as a text. Send us your preferred date and time, and we'll promptly assist you in securing an appointment that fits your schedule.

Direct Communication with Our Office

Texting through Klara means that you can have a direct line of communication with our office. Whether it's a follow-up question after a visit or a new concern you just noticed, our healthcare staff is only a message away, ensuring your care is continuous and comprehensive.

Image Uploads for Review and Analysis

Sometimes explaining a skin issue is best done with visuals. Klara allows you to snap pictures of your concern right from your phone and share them with



our staff in a secure, HIPAA-compliant manner. This way, your care team gets a clear understanding of your condition, often resulting in quicker and more accurate medical advice.

Greenbrae Dermatology invites you to take part in this innovative patient care experience. Send us a text or visit our website today, and discover the ease and convenience of staying connected with your dermatologist with just a few taps on your smartphone or keystrokes on your computer.

Don't wait; start the conversation today with Klara, and experience the future of proactive, patient-centric care.



Q&A Spotlight: Dr. Benjamin Nichols

In this month's eMagazine, we are excited to spotlight Board-Certified Dermatologist Dr. Benjamin Nichols, a beacon of expertise in the field of dermatology. With an unwavering passion for every facet of skin care, Dr. Nichols has dedicated the last 15 years of his career to serving the Marin community. His extensive experience in this unique region has provided him with an unparalleled understanding of sun-damaged skin and the myriad of issues it can present. From preventive care to innovative treatments, Dr. Nichols's commitment to his patients is evident in his comprehensive approach to dermatology, making him a trusted and revered figure in the medical community.

What inspired you to pursue a career as a dermatologist?

I think most medical students do not really have any clue what they will eventually specialize in. I had numerous interests. I liked Oncology, Infectious Diseases, Emergency Medicine, Hematology, Trauma Surgery, Intensive Care, etc. Every new system we studied was fascinating to me. It was kind of stressful, because eventually one must decide. I trained at a large public hospital called Los Angeles County-University of Southern California General Hospital (LAC-USC). In this health care system, the County of Los Angeles provided the medical facilities and employed the Residents, while USC provided the Professors. I learned about one clinic and began

to spend some time with the doctors there when I was not studying. It was the Hansen's Disease clinic, otherwise known as Leprosy. I assumed it was run by the Infectious Disease doctors, but I soon learned it was run by the Dermatologists. It was a fascinating clinic that took care of about 500 patients from across the Western United States. Most patients grew up in Mexico, India, the Philippines or Hawaii, and had been ostracized by friends and family for their condition. Some were completely cut off from friends and family because of an ancient stigma dating back to biblical times. This was my first encounter with Dermatology and Dermatologists. I soon met other Dermatology faculty and Residents and learned about skin specific diseases, such as auto-immune diseases, skin cancers, genetic disorders, inflammatory disorders and a host of other diseases. I quickly learned that Dermatology encompasses all the different things I had interests in.

What are your specialties?

I love all aspects of Dermatology and I am not sure if I really have a specialty. Working in Marin for the last 15 years has allowed me to really understand sun-damaged skin and the problems that arise with it.

What are some highlights of your career?

Early on, one of the highlights of my career was being elected president of the resident labor union, CIR-SEIU, at LAC-USC.

Our union was the largest medical resident union in the country, as the training facility had 900 residents in 60 different ACGME accrediting training programs. There were an additional 600 medical students that we mentored and taught. The mission of the hospital was to basically see anyone in Los Angeles County who has no insurance and needs medical care. We never turned any sick patient away for any reason. Being so large made things really complicated and often very difficult for the residents who were there to help people but also to learn. Our union had to be strong to navigate a path that allowed us to learn, teach, care for patients, but also take care of ourselves. Being involved with the CIR-SEIU allowed me to really get to know residents from other departments and to gain a deeper understanding of the different medical specialties.

More recently, opening this new office space and growing Greenbrae Dermatology into something bigger than it was has been pretty special. I must admit that the drive behind it was really my business partner, Dr. Sinae Kane and our business manager Ruben Cota. They had a vision for Greenbrae Dermatology, and I went with it. I have received overwhelmingly positive feedback, and I am really pleased with where our practice is headed.

What are some things a patient can do to maintain healthy skin?

The single most important thing

someone in Marin can do to maintain healthy skin is to respect the power of the sun. Anyone who has seen me as a patient knows I am not someone who pushes wearing sunscreen 24/7. I just want people to understand that UV exposure can be healthy, but UV abuse can cause lots of problems down the road. I think timing activities, standing in the shade, wearing clothing and hats are the most important things to do. Sunscreen goes on the areas that remain exposed. I do not think people should use tanning beds or “lay-out” but if you do, try to limit it. Never get a burn. A burn means your skin’s protective abilities have been overwhelmed and substantial damage to the DNA has occurred, so try to avoid burns.

What are the most common procedures you perform? What are the ones you most commonly recommend?

The most common procedure I perform is destruction of pre-cancerous lesions. Many patients see Dermatologists for routine “sprays” with liquid nitrogen. Contrary to popular belief, we do not look forward to torturing our patients with these freezes, but I think over the long run it pays off to have them routinely removed. One procedure I often recommend is Photodynamic Therapy (PDT) or “blue light”. This is a procedure we use to treat a whole bunch of pre-cancers in one sitting. It is a way to get rid of visible lesions as well as ones that we cannot really see. Using creams such as fluorouracil (5-fu) works great

as well, but I have slowly drifted to using more PDT. I think the main reason is that patients seem to like getting it all over with quicker. Application of creams typically takes weeks and reactions can last weeks while PDT is completed in a couple of hours and the healing time is much quicker.

With regards to cosmetic procedures, I will often recommend CO2 for sun-damaged skin. This laser is what we call an ablative laser and literally burns the skin. I first used a CO2 laser in 2007 and I think the newer lasers are not as aggressive. The technology has not changed but the lasers have migrated towards safety, less down time and a more natural result. You might need multiple treatments compared to the aggressive lasers used in years past, but I do believe lasers are much safer and the downtime is more manageable.

What inspires you most in life?

Lately I have been really inspired by younger generations. I have gone back and forth over the years on this, but watching my kids grow up and listening to the discussions they have with their friends and classmates keeps me optimistic about our future society. There will be and are so many changes occurring in technology and society, both political and social, and I think we will be able to navigate it well in the coming years.

For fun, I like to be outdoors. I have

always loved fishing, crabbing, hiking and birdwatching. I mostly grew up in a suburb of Los Angeles, at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, so I did not have as much outdoor space to explore as I do now. But my friends and I sought nature in nooks and crannies of Los Angeles where no one ever seemed to look. But now, with The Bay, and the mountains and trails of Marin County, and the Sierras; there is no need to search. I just have to look at a map and decide what I feel like doing.

What do you like most about working at Greenbrae Dermatology?

I think the atmosphere and the personality of the practice and people who work here are my favorite things about working at Greenbrae Dermatology. We have a busy practice, with lots of phone calls and patient visits and emails, and I feel like we take care of things in a friendly way. We joke with each other a lot but always make sure to focus on the more serious issues that our patients have. It is a medical office and our patients do have real concerns, but I think our personalities allow them to relax when they are here.

What is one thing that everybody needs to know about you?

If we are talking about patients, I think they need to know that whatever I do to them or recommend for them is what I would do or recommend for my own family member. The practice of medicine

is half “art” and half “science”. I try to figure out how my patients feel and try to explain things in simple terms and help them make a decision that feels right for them.

For instance, if someone has a concern about taking oral medications, I try to find alternative topical options, even if I know the orals are better. If someone has a small basal cell skin cancer on their back and they are reluctant to remove it, I let them know that it is safe to follow it without cutting. If they agree to return to allow me to monitor it, then I am comfortable with that. At the same time, I am honest if I think someone is making a poor decision. I review the possible negative outcomes of their decision free of judgement or pressure. Ultimately, I always allow the patient to make the final decision about their care.

Is there anything you would like to tackle in 2024?

I think I am still recovering from the Covid years. It really was a blur for me. At the start, Greenbrae Dermatology had 4 doctors and by about 3 months in, I was the last man standing. It was long hours and difficult to navigate all the business decisions as well as the global and health considerations. When I look at my kids and family, I think of things in the context of “pre-Covid” and “post-Covid”. The kids have changed and grown so much, and I feel like I want to try to spend more time with them before they fly away.



Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) Treatment for Hair Loss: The Science, Successes, and What You Need to Know

A full head of hair is often synonymous with youth, vitality, and attractiveness. Yet, for many, the battle against hair loss is a silent struggle that knows no age or gender. In recent years, the quest for effective hair restoration has led to the rise of Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) therapy — a cutting-edge, yet controversial, treatment that holds the promise of regrowth without resorting to invasive surgical procedures or long-term medication. But what exactly is PRP, and how does it fare in the market saturated with hair restoration solutions?

Understanding PRP and its Mechanisms of Action

Platelets are a natural component of the blood and play a crucial role in the body's healing process. PRP is a concentration of platelets derived from the patient's blood and is known for its rich protein content, which includes growth factors that are vital for tissue repair. When PRP is injected into the scalp, its regenerative properties are believed to promote hair growth by stimulating the stem cells and other cells in the microenvironment of the hair follicles.

Shattering Myths: The Efficacy of PRP in Clinical Studies

The conversation around PRP often involves skepticism from those who view it as a novel "trend" rather than a bona fide treatment. However, several clinical studies have pointed to PRP's effectiveness in promoting hair growth. One such study published in the *Journal of Cutaneous and Aesthetic Surgery* concluded that PRP could be a safe and effective treatment option for androgenetic alopecia, a common form of hair loss in both men and women.

The PRP Journey: Before, During, and After Treatment

For individuals considering PRP, understanding the treatment process is crucial. Typically, the procedure involves drawing blood from the patient, which is then spun in a centrifuge to separate

the plasma rich in platelets. This plasma is then injected into the scalp in the areas where hair loss is most prevalent. Patients may require several sessions, and results can take several months to become noticeable.

Who is the Ideal Candidate for PRP Treatment?

While PRP may seem like a "one-size-fits-all" solution, not everyone is suited for this treatment. Ideal candidates for PRP are individuals in the early stages of hair loss with small areas of alopecia or patients looking to complement other hair restoration procedures. The therapy is less likely to be effective for those with advanced balding, where the hair follicles are damaged beyond repair.

The Road to Recovery and Managing Expectations

Post-treatment care is critical in ensuring the best possible outcome. While PRP injection generally involves minimal



downtime, some patients may experience mild discomfort, redness, or swelling in the treated area. It's also important for patients to have realistic expectations — PRP is not a guarantee for a full head of hair but could lead to the visible reduction in hair loss.

Risks and Side Effects: Debunking PRP's Safety Concerns

Every medical intervention comes with risks, and PRP is no exception. Common side effects include mild pain at the injection site, but more severe complications are rare. Nevertheless, it's crucial for patients to be informed about the possible risks and discuss any concerns with their healthcare provider before opting for the treatment.

PRP and the Future of Hair Restoration

The field of hair restoration is constantly evolving, and PRP is at the forefront of this transformation. Ongoing research continues to explore how PRP can be optimized for better results, potentially in combination with other treatments or through innovative delivery methods. Its minimally invasive nature and the fact that it utilizes the patient's own blood for the procedure makes PRP an attractive option with potential for long-term sustainability.

Navigating the Path to Hair Restoration with PRP

For those exploring their options in the



fight against hair loss, PRP offers a compelling blend of science and innovation. While it's not a silver bullet for baldness, the therapy's growing body of evidence and its increasing availability in reputable practices warrant attention from prospective patients. By staying informed about the treatment, its process, and its outcomes, individuals can make empowered decisions about their hair health and reclaim confidence in their appearance.

In the grand tapestry of hair restoration solutions, Platelet-Rich Plasma emerges as a thread worth weaving into the conversation. Its role may not be that of a singular savior from hair loss, but it is a powerful ally, complementing other techniques, or even standing sturdy on its own for some patients. The medical community continues to untangle PRP's web of potential, and for those suffering from hair loss, the treatment shines as a beacon of hope, one injection at a time.