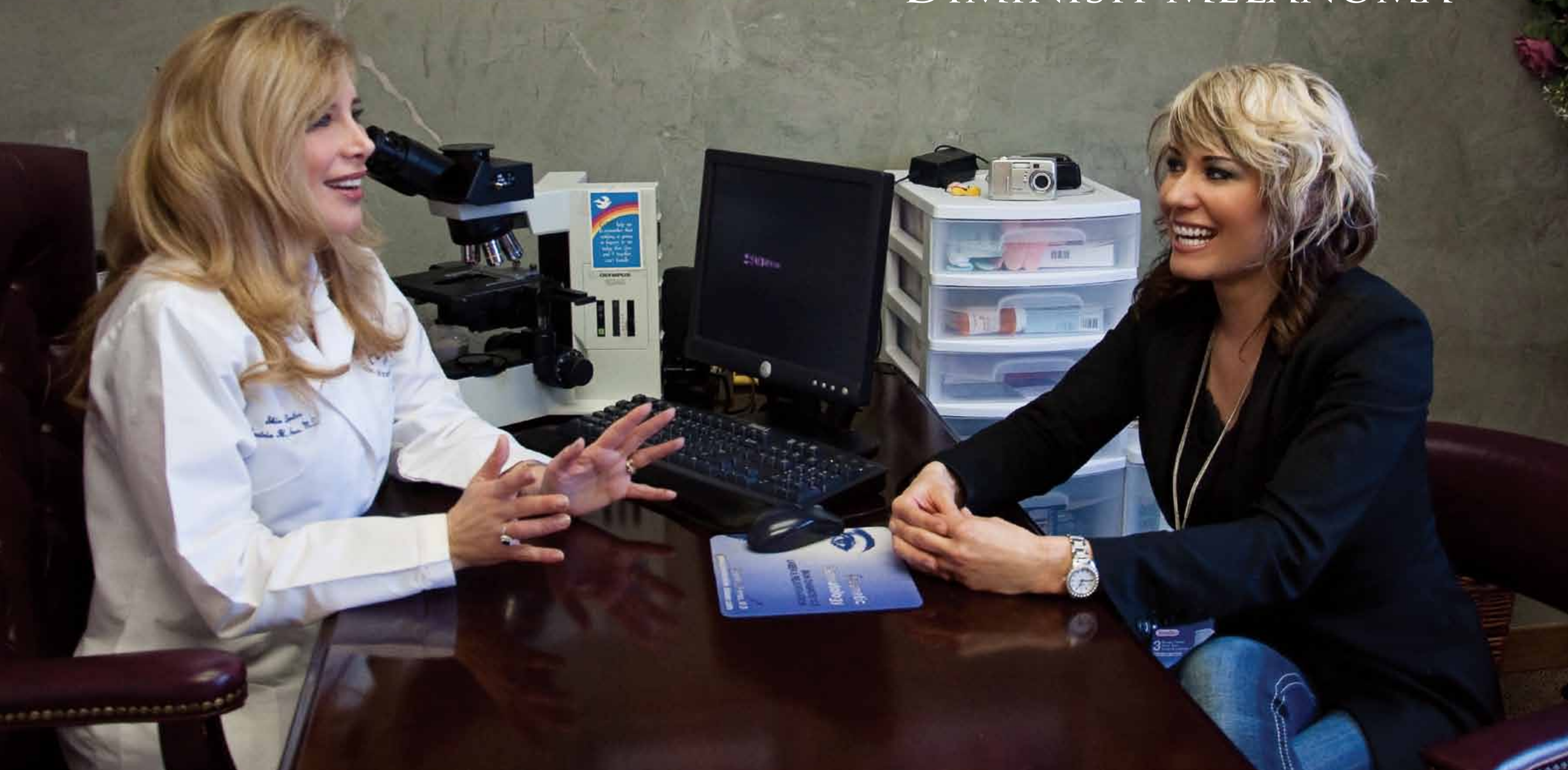


BE PROACTIVE,  
TAKE PRECAUTION, &  
DIMINISH MELANOMA



Dr. Beatriz Porrás of Skin Diagnostics Laser & Rejuvenation met Angie when Angie accompanied her friend to an appointment with Dr. Porrás. While Angie was at the office, Dr. Porrás noticed a dark and irregular mole on Angie's neck. She voiced her concern and promptly scheduled an appointment for the mole to be biopsied. After the biopsy Angie learned that the mole was in fact stage one melanoma.

"I had never guessed that I would have been at risk for skin cancer," says Angie. "I was extremely lucky that Dr. Porrás was so observant and thorough."

Luckily the melanoma was in an early stage, and Dr. Porrás referred Angie to a surgeon to have the mole removed immediately. Dr. Porrás believes in her heart that it was fate that Angie was in her office that day. Angie had had no prior inclination to see a dermatologist, but simply being in the presence of Dr. Porrás allowed for the early detection of her melanoma. If it had gone undetected, the melanoma would have advanced, and Angie could possibly have died. Dr. Porrás has seen a number of cases where people, especially young people, are diagnosed with melanoma who never believed they could be at risk.

"I understand now not to take things for granted and to be much more proactive about my health and body," says Angie. "I am so grateful for Dr. Porrás. She was incredibly kind and very serious about the threat of melanoma and how necessary it is to protect your skin and do self-examinations." Angie used to go to the tanning bed about ten times a year, and like many others she fell under the false belief that since she rarely tanned and has an olive complexion, she would not be at risk for skin cancer. Dr. Porrás explains, "Tanning beds can double or triple your risk of developing melanoma."

At a young age, Dr. Porrás had watched her grandfather pass away from melanoma, and that has been the driving force behind her career in dermatology. She is passionate about educating people about the risks of melanoma and taking precautionary measures to protect her patients. She wants to stress the importance of catching melanoma early through self-examination, education, and taking preventative measures. It is imperative for people to protect themselves from the sun's rays and to avoid tanning beds. "Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States," says Dr. Porrás. Skin cancer is a preventable cancer that can generally be detected in early stages. It is necessary for people to be proactive and check their skin and their loved one's skin for abnormal moles and skin spots.

Dr. Porrás teaches her patients the A, B, C, D, and E's of melanoma. These are things a patient should check for when doing self-evaluations of moles.

- A is for Asymmetry. One half of the mole is unlike the other.
- B is for Border. Is the border scalloped or poorly defined?
- C is for Color. Notice if it varies from one area to another, or if contains shades of tan and brown, black, or sometimes white, red, or blue.
- D is for Diameter. Typically melanomas are greater than 6mm, approximately the size of a pencil eraser, but some can be diagnosed smaller.
- E is for Evolving. Does the mole or skin lesion look as though it is changing in size or color, or does it become irritated, itch, or bleed? ❖

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