

## **Asheboro Dermatology & Skin Surgery Center**

### **Spontaneous Ecchymosis**

Spontaneous ecchymosis (also called ‘actinic purpura’) is extremely common. It occurs primarily on the forearms and hands but can also occur on the legs. Basically, tiny vessels rupture in the skin and leave black, purple and/or red patches. The patches can easily tear. Though the process is similar to “bruising”, this occurs in the skin surface whereas “bruises” tend to be deeper.

These patches can occur from any trauma including very minor trauma or they can occur without any trauma. Factors that contribute include (1) Older age (2) A lot of sun exposure over years (3) Taking blood thinning meds (4) Steroid (oral or topical) use over time.

#### **Here are some things that might help out.....**

1 – Plan ahead to use soft cloth sleeves (for protection) when doing any “work” that will cause bumping of the arms/hands.

2 – Ask your provider about your blood thinner regimen. Do **NOT** stop blood thinners as they are probably VERY important for you. However, ask your health care provider if you can reduce your dose.

3 – Always use sunscreen if you will be outside for a long period of time. Chronic sun exposure helps create and worsen this condition.

4 – Apply Lac-Hydrin 12% Lotion (e.g. Ammonium Lactate, Amlactin) twice daily LONG TERM. There are a variety of these 12% products. Some are over-the-counter and some are by prescription. Lotions are more elegant and easier to spread, but cream base products are more potent. These products slowly increase the skin thickness over a long period of time. This is hugely beneficial to minimizing the ecchymotic areas. These products are usually less than \$20 a bottle/tube.