

BEAUTY Skin deep



PHOTO: CORBIS

The Skin Doctor

With the millions of wonder creams and face potions on the market today it is no surprise that people are confused about which products to choose. HELLO! looks at the value of consulting a dermatologist who guarantees to get your skin glowing

When it comes to Hollywood red-carpet events you can be assured that although starlets might change their mind about their outfits up until the last minute, their skin is something seldom left to chance.

Beauties start preparing up to six months in advance to make sure their skin is glowing on the night of nights. This involves a consultation with their tried and trusted dermatologist, who will offer a skinscription of facials, masks and products that will guarantee a perfect canvas on which to apply their make-up.

And not all beauties have the luminous skin that appears on screen – it can take months of preparation. Stars such as Cameron Diaz openly admit to super sensitive skin prone to bumps and blemishes that flare up when stressed. It is

rumoured that she has even pulled out of red-carpet events because of the problem.

English rose Keira Knightley also admits that her skin is far from perfect.

“I’ve got really awful skin. I always get acne, so it’s incredibly nice when they take it out digitally. I wish they could do that for me in everyday life as well”, she said.

Other songbirds including Britney Spears and Jessica Simpson have all been photographed with less than perfect looking skin.

There is much to be said for the quote: ‘Before 30 you get the skin you were born with, after 30 you get the skin that you deserve.’ If, like the majority of the population, you look in the mirror and notice your skin doesn’t look its glowing best – take heart there is help at hand.

While skin specialists can’t promise miracles they can help reverse the signs of ageing which include pigmentation, fine lines, sun spots, dark circles and open pores in a few sessions.

Beirut-born dermatologist Mona Merhej from Dubai Cosmetic Surgery, is one of the most popular skin saviours in the Middle East after helping to revive many a society girl’s complexion.

And although she won’t reveal the names of her clients the list includes many local television stars, sheikhas, society ladies and regular visits from Emirates airline staff who entrust their skin to her midas touch.

She was recently voted by *Emirates Woman* magazine as number one for Anti-Ageing facials in Dubai 2007.

Mona reveals that she sees up to 15 clients in a day and performs procedures ranging

from microdermabrasion and chemical peels to skin whitening and rejuvenation treatments.

She also addresses problems to treat special skin problems including acne and open pores.

“The days are always long, most nights I don’t leave the clinic until 9pm – but it is an industry I love. I’ve always been interested in skin treatments and making women aware of the best ways to keep their skin looking young and fresh,” she says.

After graduating from the Marie Rose Institute in 1987 in Beirut, Mona has practised at clinics in Lebanon, Canada and now Dubai.

Her top tip for women wanting to avoid skin damage is to stay out of the sun. “The sun is the number one cause of skin damage, especially here in the Middle East. I go down to the beach and sit in the shade and am horrified when I see people lying out in the sun with no hat or sunscreen – it just ruins your skin.”

One celebrity who heeds this advice is Australian actress Nicole Kidman, lauded for her porcelain complexion, which she owes to staying out of the sun at all costs.

Mona admits that many people have come to see her as a last resort after trying many of the products on the market to help correct skin problems, many caused by sun damage.

“I think the best thing people can do for their skin is to go and see a dermatologist. I can look at a person’s skin and know what products they should be using and what treatments they need to help remove skin damage.”

Despite the constant onslaught of new face potions hitting the shelves every week promising extraordinary results, Mona says it is important people find out what products suit their skin before investing in ultra expensive creams.

“I would recommend that people don’t go and buy a cream from a counter before consulting an expert. These people are sales people and customers are regularly paying for the price of marketing not the cream. It’s not about the price you pay for the cream, it’s whether the cream is suitable for the skin.”

Mona opts to use German branded products known as Reviderm in the clinic which includes a range of face creams with SPF, vitamin C serum and night creams that can all be matched to the individual needs of her patients.

“It’s a bio-medical product which means that the active ingredient percentage is much higher and much more effective than many commercial creams.”

Depending on skin type Mona will suggest a skin regime suitable for your skin type. And it’s easier than you think – cleanser, toner, moisturiser and sunblock are the cornerstones of a good skincare regime.

Each individual’s skin is different and has different requirements – Mona suggests clients have an initial consultation and then maintain their skin with a rejuvenation treatment at least once a month to maintain a glowing appearance.

From personal experience and being a sun worshipper in my teens – I can vouch for the damage that the sun’s rays have left behind including skin pigmentation.

Despite a variety of treatments and promises to banish the dark spots nothing had managed to erase the brown patches, which were visible.

Luckily, as Mona explained, much of the damage could be reversed if customers commit to a regime recommended by a dermatologist. She explains some customers require only a few treatments of microdermabrasion or peels followed by a monthly facial rejuvenation and other clients may need weekly sessions over several months to notice a difference.

In my case it involved six sessions to help combat the dark pigmentation spots – and it didn’t involve anything too painful. An hour session every two weeks consisting of microdermabrasion and a facemask tailored to the needs of the skin did wonders.

This was combined with a new skin care regime, which took less than five minutes morning and night. In less than two months the problem has almost vanished.

But as Mona suggests don’t lapse into old habits such as going to the beach without a hat. “You can add to that list that the most important thing of all is taking the advice of a dermatologist and not forgetting the routine in between salon visits,” she said.

The beauty of investing in a dermatologist is the fact that they will tailor the beauty treatments to each individual’s skin, it requires little time, won’t break the budget and guarantees glowing skin.



Mona’s top tips for maintaining healthy skin

- Never go out into the sun without sunblock. Apply sunscreen 30 minutes prior to going outdoors and then re-apply every three hours. The SPF should be as high as 20 and if possible also use a moisturiser that includes an SPF so you have double protection against the harsh sun.
- Drink eight glasses of water or more each day. This is especially important in the Middle East due to the heat and the air conditioning.
- Nourish your body from within. What you eat shows on your skin and affects the health of your hair and nails. Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables along with raw nuts such as almonds and sunflower seeds to give skin a healthy glow.
- Make time for up to 20 minutes of exercise each day – this will get the blood circulating and plump up skin.
- Getting a good night’s sleep is free and the number one beauty secret. Try to get eight hours each night – the skin rejuvenates itself at night so put on a serum that can be easily absorbed.
- Treat your skin to at least one microdermabrasion session a month. It is the best way to remove dead skin cells so your moisturiser will be absorbed much easier.

For details contact Mona at Dubai Cosmetic Surgery visit [www. Dubaicosmeticsurgery.com](http://www.Dubaicosmeticsurgery.com)



PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Madonna’s dermatologist Dr. Frederick Brandt became so popular he opted to launch a signature range of products worldwide. Cameron Diaz reveals she suffers from sensitive skin and relies on potions from her skin doctor to get her red carpet ready. L’Oreal’s new face Demi Moore swears by the benefits of regular microdermabrasion sessions to keep her skin in tip-top condition.