

Skincare – are your money and time an indulgence or investment?

If skin was paid a salary to do all that it does in just one year, we probably couldn't afford to employ it! The very least we can do is allow it to work in the best possible condition so that it can do all the important jobs it's required to perform. You wouldn't expect your car to drive efficiently, comfortably and remain roadworthy without proper maintenance.

Skin's work load is enormous: to protect, breathe, absorb, excrete, provide sensory information to the brain about temperature or texture, house a variety of body components from hair to capillaries, to stretch and contract (sometimes enormously) remain water resistant and completely renew itself on a monthly basis. It suffers bumps, rashes, burns, tears and a variety of other accidental and self imposed traumas and is able to heal itself, albeit sometimes with scarring. It is our largest organ and can tolerate being grafted, tattooed and pierced. All this to do and yet skin is incredibly thin, averaging just 1.3 millimetres in thickness and works in a relatively hostile environment. So strong and yet so fragile, skin can be cut by the edge of a piece of paper!

Your skin needs to last a lifetime. Why wouldn't we want to look after it? It is a complicated structure that needs maintenance for more than aesthetic reasons, and simply showering daily is just not sufficient! Obviously a healthy diet feeds skin from within, clothing gives protection from the elements and scrapes, and removing dirt, splinters, grease, food or other debris gives a degree of cleanliness and minimises risk of infection.

Rather than a large expenditure, one needs only common sense and a change of shopping habits for a *better expenditure* – products that will properly and safely care for your skin type. "Safely" means safe for your skin, health (as the ingredients are absorbed by skin) and the environment as they will all go down the plughole into the waterways.

Recall what you learned back in primary school about skin and basic nutrition. Skin is a tight barrier closing out tiny germs but also open enough to breathe, excrete and absorb. If its tiny openings are blocked by plastic films these functions are impaired; like not putting a plastic bag over our head we should not be blocking our pores on mass with face and body potions. Logically if what is blocking the pores is also irritating or even slightly toxic, we are compounding the problem. Secondly, we eat **real** food for nutrition and energy, not lab made ingredients; even though they may create a temporary sense of fullness they impart no nutritional value and are toxic.

Our skin needs real ingredients for nutrition and energy. Like food, skincare should provide a broad spectrum of goodies and in a concentrated form. With the right ingredients our skin can be able flush itself of impurities and inflammation, rebalance oil levels, firm, tighten, stay hydrated, heal and given the 'kick' needed to behave like younger skin in increasing collagen.

Cosmetics with plastics may give a temporary smooth veneer or plumping but while only masking symptoms rather than treating problems and feeding, they also have a dark side. These products, no matter how high calibre some of the ingredients may sound, are neither an investment nor an indulgence. Their preservatives are either hormone disrupting parabens or formaldehyde donors such as imid urea. Frequently containing artificial fragrance and colours, propylene glycol, SLS and other petrochemicals you are applying ingredients that are both counter-productive to your objectives and linked to a variety of health concerns including cancer and birth deformities. Autopsies prove with the skin acting as a sponge, the user's organs collect a diverse range of manmade chemicals.

A perfume alone may contain 300 or more different synthetic ingredients, and the cumulative effect this multitude of synthetics applied daily may not cause your skin to show trauma immediately. Seemingly perfect skins coated in regular cosmetics typically develop sensitivities later on - adult acne, rosacea, dermatitis and premature aging. We see this every day with sufferers coming to our salon, and as soon as they swing over to 100% natural and potent skincare their complexions quickly repair!

Synthetic preservatives, surfactants, emulsifiers, perfumes etc may all work very effectively in assisting the product smell seductive, last years longer or creating masses of fun bubbles but are neither essential or fun when they impair skin function, irritate it and even injure it to the point of blistering. Cosmetics made from synthetics clearly are not a good investment in skincare!

100% natural and safe cosmetics eliminate the absorption of 1000's of synthetics over just the course of a year. That makes it an investment in itself! Invest in your skin, it absolutely deserves it, but ensure that what you purchase is going to BE what you expect – just constructive and safe ingredients.

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