

If there's one thing women are obsessed with, it's whitening. And it has nothing to do with the recent craze over things Japanese like *Memoirs of a Geisha* or about being the fairest of them all. What these women want is an answer to their uneven and spotty skin.

Just ask consultant dermatologist, Dr Patricia Yuen, who says that 70 per cent of her female patients come in for whitening treatments like chemical peels, lasers and microdermabrasion. Costing thousands of dollars, it's supposed to deliver results in as few as six sessions. But don't count on it as a cure-all. Long-term maintenance is still key.

To enhance the benefits of the procedures, you'll need to use the right products at home, advises Dr Yuen, who was speaking at an SK-II product launch.

One of the things you can do for your skin is to exfoliate regularly. This brightens skin and preps it to absorb the nutrients it needs. Contrary to popular opinion, regular exfoliation is good and will not thin out the skin's structure. It removes dead skin cells from the skin's surface, which improves blood circulation, boosts collagen levels, leaving skin smooth and luminous like a freshly harvested pearl.

A smooth face with skin that glows is a sure sign of regular exfoliation. Think of this as having a mirror for skin.

When the surface is wiped clean, you see a clear reflection of yourself. But when it's tainted, vision is blurred. When there is a dead-cell pile-up, light simply gets absorbed and what we see is a dull, matte and murky appearance.

Coming to the rescue is SK-II's latest additions to its Whitening Source family – Whitening Source Clear Lotion is a gentle exfoliator, toner and skin softener while the Whitening Source Skin Brightener is a velvety daily moisturiser.

The Clear Lotion has micro-particles that slough off "melanin dust", also known as skin pigmentation, to give complexions a nice glow and boost the absorption of other products to follow. "Melanin dust" results from a build-up of dirt and grime on the skin over time. It can appear as brown specks or a rough and uneven skin tone, which dulls your complexion. Tip: The Clear Lotion, when chilled, makes a great face mask to cool down, hydrate and soften flushed skin.

The Skin Brightener contains Pitera that nourishes the skin and speeds up cell turnover, Vitamin C and B3 that lightens spots, and a marine derivative that's believed to suppress melanin production.

SK-II beauty therapists recommend using the Clear

Lotion after the Facial Treatment Cleanser, followed by the Facial Treatment Essence, The Whitening Source Serum, and ending off with the Skin Brightener.

If you follow the 5-step programme religiously, you may just notice brighter, smoother skin within a week.

But isn't that too much work? Not by the standards of Japanese women, who use up to seven products at a go. Dr Yuen assures that if you exfoliate well, products will penetrate the skin in a matter of seconds, leaving you with

a radiant and healthy glow. Now, who wouldn't want that? **HW**

"Apart from medical procedures, I always stress to my patients the importance of a disciplined maintenance regime, to keep their pigmentation concerns at bay."

Dr Patricia Yuen, consultant dermatologist, at the SK-II launch



Where does this all fit in?

A toner and moisturiser, the two new Whitening Source products, fill in the gaps of the SK-II range to make up a complete skincare system. For best results, beauty therapists recommend starting with the Facial Treatment Cleanser, followed by the Clear Lotion, the Facial Treatment Essence, Serum, and ending off with the quick-absorbing Skin Brightener.

SK-II Whitening Source Skin Brightener (\$168) and SK-II Whitening Source Clear Lotion (\$88) are available at all SK-II counters.

The seven skin benefits of Pitera

- · Replenishes skin's moisture
- Enhances skin's natural renewal cycle by revealing new skin
- · Smoothens skin surface texture
- · Rebalance skin's pH
- · Controls sebum level in the skin
- · Soothes sun-dried skin
- Makes skin look crystal clear

