

GET-RICH TIPS FROM A BILLIONAIRE: USE THEM NOW!

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"I'm sick of being poor!"

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WATCH OUT

FACIAL ADDICTS
Don't wear out your skin!

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distress signals

In general, understand your skin and look out for signs that suggest you've had one too many facials. If your skin is irritated, it will show "redness, itching, excessive peeling, or when hives start to form", says consultant dermatologist Dr Patricia Yuen from Pacific Specialist Practice Paragon. You may be allergic to the substances used in the treatment.

Hormonal changes, such as during your menstruation, may affect your skin sensitivity. You may already have active breakouts because of your period, so treatment during this time

"Get your treatments done in between your menses."

may aggravate any acne inflammation and potentially cause more scarring, says Dr Chua. So get your treatments done in between your menses.

All said, the greater danger to facial junkies is not overdosing nor sensitive skin but untrained practitioners.

Some beauticians are not well-trained and are unable to analyse a person's skin accurately before recommending treatments, says Dr Kwok. In other countries, beauticians have to undergo proper training and accreditation before they are allowed to practise. This is not the case in Singapore.

Says Dr Yuen, who sees at least one patient a week who experienced problems with a facial treatment done by a beautician: "I always recommend doing facial procedures at a doctor's clinic because they are well-trained and qualified to administer more effective means to treat a specific skin problem as well as take care of any complications which may occur later."

Her one-liner prescription? "For real skin problems, see a dermatologist, but for a pampering experience and less serious issues, go to a beautician for a facial."

But facial addicts like Geraldine are happy with what they see.

She will continue her fortnightly visits to cheaper beauty centres for "simple treatments" and pay over \$100 per treatment for her regular bi-monthly regime and for serious breakouts "because they have better-trained beauticians and are more thorough. My complexion really clears up completely after that".

The girl can't help it.

As Geraldine herself puts it: "It's like a drug that we're dependent on." ■

chemical peel burnt me

The story of a teen whose face got fried



Photo taken four days after Novie's peel. The doctor reported extensive chemical erosion and crusting.

WHEN NOVIE LIM stepped into the beauty salon last May for one of her monthly facials, she had no idea that 20 minutes later, she was going to walk out with chemical burn marks on half her face that would last for the next 30 days.

"I cried buckets," she says.

"I was extremely depressed and my face was in so much pain."

The 17-year-old had been a regular at beauty salons since she was Secondary One. She was so used to having things done to her face that when her beautician recommended a chemical peel – something she was new to – she let her guard down and didn't ask questions. "I just wanted to improve the condition of my acne-scarred face. And the beautician convinced me the treatment wouldn't hurt much. So, I tried it," explains the student.

However, less than a minute after the chemical solution was applied, Novie felt a stinging pain. Although she cried for help, the beautician came to her rescue only minutes later. It was too late. Some of the solution had dribbled down Novie's chin and onto her neck, burning her even more.

Four days later, Novie experienced the brutal consequences of the beautician's negligence. Her pus-filled wound was infected, causing her blood pressure to drop and her chest to hurt. Running a 39 deg C fever, Novie fainted and was admitted to Changi General Hospital for inpatient treatment.

Novie's skin was burnt and punctured. Bacteria had eaten into her face and entered her bloodstream. Crust formed around the wound and she couldn't open her mouth to chew or eat because of the intense pain on her jaw and neck area.

Her doctor suspected that the wrong skin analysis and poor monitoring of the process could have caused the mishap.

Says Novie: "I was miserable. I didn't dare go out because I didn't want more germs to infect my wound. Luckily it was during the school holidays. It was only about a month later before I had courage to go out again."

It's been months, but even today, her 5-cm scar stretching from her chin to the middle of her neck has yet to fade completely.

Treat your face well *

To learn more about the different facial treatments, you can attend a talk by the National Skin Centre (NSC), titled Comprehensive Approach To Beautiful Skin, on March 12, 2005.

The talk will be held at the HDB HUB Convention Centre from 2pm to 5pm; cost is \$10 per person. Call the Training Department at 6350-8436/7 or visit the NSC website at www.nsc.gov.sg.