

FEATURE

SAVING FACE

Mark important moments in life with smiles, not skin woes. Here, ways to get through every milestone and look your best while at it. By Justina Tan

WORKING GIRL

You thought your years of battling adolescent acne were over, but embarking on a career has brought on a fresh onslaught of pesky pimples. Working overtime and spending sleepless nights on projects may impress your boss, but it puts a lot of stress on the mind and body. This increases cortisol (stress hormone) levels, causing oil production to go into overdrive.

"Oily skin becomes excessively thick and rough, thereby clogging up pores," explains Dr Jean Ho, consultant dermatologist with Jean Ho Skin and Laser Clinic.

You're also more likely to wear makeup and fall asleep in it, making skin more prone to breakouts. Start skin on a non-drying anti-blemish regime like Boscia Clear Complexion Kit (\$69) – the cleanser, toner, treatment and moisturiser are alcohol-free and contain a natural salicylic acid to exfoliate and unclog pores, while rosemary leaf extract provides anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

If acne persists or worsens, consult a dermatologist, as prescription

treatments like topical retinoids, oral antibiotics, contraceptives or isotretinoin may be required. If you're using retinoids, sun protection is crucial. Try Murad Anti-Aging Moisturizer SPF 20 (\$102) for blemish-prone skin; it contains a broad-spectrum sunscreen, controls blemishes, reduces inflammation and stimulates collagen production.

BRIDE-TO-BE

Saying "I do" is exciting, but any bride will attest to how stressful the planning process is. In between finalising guest lists, shopping for the perfect gown and wedding rehearsals, skin can go from flawless to frazzled.

Besides breakouts, cold sores, rashes and dull skin are par for the course. In the months leading up to the big day, build skin's immunity with nourishing foods like Omega-3 fatty acids, whole grains and citrus. If an unsightly cold sore pops up, quickly slather on a topical antiviral cream or head to the doctor for oral antiviral pills. For rashes, pop antihistamines and apply a topical steroid cream.

To keep skin blemish-free, have an in-clinic chemical peel done



RESEARCH SHOWS THAT A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF WOMEN OLDER THAN 25 YEARS HAVE ACNE THAT DOES NOT DECREASE UNTIL THE AGE OF 44.

every month or so for three or more months prior to the event (rest the week before). Instead, three to four days before, undergo intense pulsed light (IPL) treatment to clarify and rejuvenate skin, suggests Dr Ho.

Exfoliate at least twice a week and apply an antioxidant cream day and night to stave off free radicals and restore radiance. PreVage Day Intensive Anti-aging Moisture Cream SPF 30 (\$246) and PreVage Night Anti-aging Restorative Cream (\$256) are made with idebenone, a powerful antioxidant that effectively protects skin from environmental stress. The day cream provides sun protection, while the night cream has an added retinol derivative to retexturise skin and smooth lines and wrinkles.

BABY BLUES

The “pregnancy glow” may not be a myth, but it surely has more to do with increased oil production (hormones!) and brighter skin (increased blood production and circulation). Rapid cell growth also gives you stronger nails and a more luxuriant mane. Sadly, that’s where the niceties end.

Raging pregnancy hormones have been known to cause dark splotches on the face, darkening of freckles and moles and acne breakouts. “An increase in oestrogen levels can lead to hyperpigmentary changes, known as melasma or the mask of pregnancy. Sometimes the condition spontaneously resolves, but at other times it persists,” says Dr Joseph See, an aesthetic physician with See Medical Aesthetics.

Skin tends to be more sensitive during pregnancy, so instead of plying skin with harsh whitening products, keep melasma at bay with a gentle yet effective brightening serum like

SKIN TENDS TO BE MORE SENSITIVE DURING PREGNANCY, SO INSTEAD OF PLYING SKIN WITH HARSH WHITENING PRODUCTS, KEEP MELASMA AT BAY WITH A GENTLE YET EFFECTIVE BRIGHTENING SERUM



La Roche-Posay Sensi White Essence (\$87.90). Suitable for ultra-sensitive skin types, the formula only contains a handful of active ingredients – lipo hydroxy acid for superior exfoliation (supposedly seven times more effective than salicylic acid); ferulic acid with ginkgo to regulate melanin production; vitamin B3 to neutralise inflammation; and thermal spring water to soothe and calm skin.

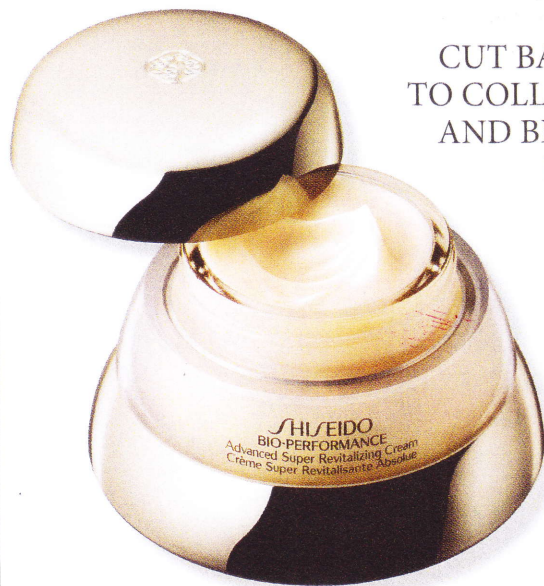
Also apply a broad-spectrum sunscreen with physical barriers like zinc oxide and titanium dioxide daily. We like SkinCeuticals Sheer Physical UV Defense SPF 50 (\$66), as it’s transparent and mattifying, unlike many physical blockers that leave a whitish cast on skin. If the melasma still doesn’t fade even after childbirth

visit the dermatologist or aesthetic physician for chemical peels, IPL or pigment laser treatments. Treating acne during pregnancy is tricky when skin is so sensitive, so avoid anti-acne ingredients like retinol, salicylic acid and benzoyl peroxide. Instead, opt for natural alternatives like tea tree oil.

THIRTIES & TERRIFIED

There’s a reason why many anti-ageing skincare products are targeted at women aged 35 and above. “As women age, declining levels of oestrogen cause skin to become drier and aesthetic changes like wrinkles, saggy skin and pigmentation become

CUT BACK ON DESSERTS BECAUSE SUGAR MOLECULES CLING TO COLLAGEN AND ELASTIN FIBRES, CAUSING THEM TO STIFFEN AND BREAK. THIS DESTROYS THE SKIN'S SUPPORT MATTRESS, RESULTING IN SKIN SAGGINESS AND WRINKLES.



more apparent," explains Dr See.

To nip dry and crepey skin in the bud, use Shiseido Bio-Performance Advanced Super Revitalizing Cream (\$143). The formula reduces visibility of lines and firms skin by stimulating production of elastic fibres, while a high level of hydration helps to smooth the complexion.

The skin around eyes also becomes drier and thinner, making crow's feet, eye bags and dark circles more obvious. Clé de Peau Beauté Intensive Eye Contour Cream (\$270) – a rich-textured eye cream best used at bedtime – improves circulation, brightens, prevents build-up of fluids and fats, strengthens eye zone muscles and combats UV damage from the day.

With age, skin cell renewal also slows down, leading to a rougher and duller complexion. Lend lacklustre skin a helping hand with Lierac High Peel (\$78), a daily use skin resurfacing treatment with 10 per cent hydroxy acid and encapsulated glycolic acid for optimal tolerance. Maintain results with Dr Andrew Weil for Origins

Mega-Bright Skin illuminating serum (\$108) – the 100 per cent organic formula quells melanin-triggering stress with antioxidant-rich rosa roxburghii (it has 30 times more vitamin C than the kiwi fruit!).

MENOPAUSE

Hot flashes and mood swings aren't the only symptoms that plague perimenopausal (transitional period into menopause) women. To add insult to injury, skin moisture levels plunge, so wrinkles and fine lines become more noticeable.

Cut back on desserts because sugar molecules cling to collagen and elastin fibres, causing them to stiffen and break. This destroys the skin's support mattress, resulting in skin sagging and wrinkles. Instead, load up on antioxidant-rich foods like broccoli, berries and citrus fruit.

Technology is your best friend. Start each day with a serum like Givenchy Vax'in For Youth (\$134). It encourages skin cells to produce an age-defying protein to defend existing or newly created proteins, repair damaged proteins and eliminate those that are beyond repair. Thereafter, apply Dior L'Or De Vie Crème (\$560), which contains the Miyabenol C molecule – it helps to reverse the effects of time by allowing skin to imprison age factors and control up to 54 per cent of genes involved in the cutaneous ageing process. Skin feels instantly smoother; lines fade and skin becomes firmer over time.

For faster results, Dr Ho suggests a rejuvenating laser that can restore youthful dewiness to the complexion. Alternatively, there is Titan, a non-invasive light-based tightening treatment that instantly tightens and lifts, while boosting collagen production over time. "These treatments are not just for maintenance, but also excellent if you want to look good before an important event," she offers.



(FROM TOP) SHISEIDO BIO-PERFORMANCE ADVANCED SUPER REVITALIZING CREAM, DIOR L'OR DE VIE CRÈME, GIVENCHY VAX'IN FOR YOUTH, DIOR L'OR DE VIE CRÈME, SKINCEUTICALS SHEER PHYSICAL UV DEFENSE, CLÉ DE PEAU BEAUTÉ INTENSIVE EYE CONTOUR CREAM, LA ROCHE-POSAY SENSI WHITE ESSENCE

