

# Skin Deep

A close-up portrait of a woman with voluminous, curly, reddish-brown hair. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. She is wearing a light blue collared shirt. The background is a light blue wall with horizontal lines.

Problem skin or prematurely ageing can impact on a person's self-esteem and feel-good factor. Fortunately, the natural skin care industry is continually revealing new and exciting ingredients and products...

*Opting for prescribed medications or chemical topical treatments often proves to be more of a short-term fix rather than a long-term solution.*

*New advances in natural skin care ingredients, with well-researched and proven benefits, are continually evolving. Taking the time to source new products to suit your individual skin issues can often pay off in the long-term.*

Common skin complaints vary from occasional dry or oily skin to the more impactful eczema, dermatitis, acne and psoriasis. Cutting back on alcohol, sugar, caffeine and late nights can all have a positive impact on the health of your skin. Making sure you stay hydrated each day and eat a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables to help boost your antioxidant status is also vitally important.

## Shed new light on acne

Tried every lotion, potion and antibiotic available to get rid of your acne? Well there's a new hand-held, home light therapy treatment which previously has only been available from specialist dermatologists and spas.

Although acne is traditionally considered to be a teenage problem, it actually affects people of all ages and, for example, is not uncommon among women in their 40s. The problem is that many acne sufferers end up on a cycle of harsh medications in order to control their symptoms, and they often find then stopping their medication triggers a flare-up of their skin eruptions.

We spoke with **Jonathan Cridland**, CEO at **Lumie**, to find out about the benefits of this type of light therapy. Jonathan said; "Light therapy has been shown to be more effective than benzoyl peroxide, and does not have the side-effects often associated with acne treatments such as burning, redness, drying, stinging or contributing to antibiotic resistance. Research by dermatologists at Hammersmith Hospital has shown that blue light kills the bacteria that cause

acne, and red light soothes the skin. People with mild to moderate acne report a 76 per cent improvement in their skin within 12 weeks, with none of the side-effects of harsh creams or antibiotics."

Lumie Clear was developed following this research, and it is the only home light therapy treatment to have a light range specifically set at 415 nm for the blue light, combined with 660 nm for the red light which, according to research, optimises its beneficial impact.

Dr Rakesh Patalay, Consultant Dermatologist, says: "Acne is not just a teenage condition. We are seeing increasing numbers of older people with the condition, and persistent acne can have a large impact on your quality of life. Lumie Clear can be used by anyone without prescription, and is complementary to other treatments."

## Skin allergies and probiotics

The incidence of allergic diseases, including skin conditions, is ever increasing, now affecting up to 20 per cent of children in the Western population. It appears that each are often interlinked, with common immune and gut alterations observed. We spoke to **Natalie Lamb**, Technical Advisor at **BioKult**, about the link between skin conditions and allergy. Natalie said; "Allergy is said to be a malfunction of the immune system, in which harmless environmental or food substances are interpreted as being harmful, causing the immune system to react incorrectly towards them. Current treatment is to suppress this immune response with various medications. However, as this is the same defence mechanism the body uses to protect us from truly harmful pathogens, their long-term use may not be ideal."

So why are we seeing such an increase in allergic skin conditions? Natalie responds; "The gut mucosal barrier houses approximately 70 per cent of the body's immune cells, and is lined and influenced by a diverse microflora that plays an important role in the development and function of the corresponding immune system".

## Gut bacteria

Specific beneficial strains appear to stimulate more regulatory or calming immune cells. Dysbiosis (imbalanced microflora), or a less diverse range of species, has been observed in those suffering allergic diseases. The 'hygiene hypothesis' is one theory that suggests the sterile environment of the Western world has reduced our interaction with a wide range of microbes and necessary stimulation to enable a healthy

development of the immune system.

## Leaky gut

Secondly, the intestinal wall provides an important defence barrier to foreign invaders such as nasty bugs, toxins, inflammatory markers and large, undigested food particles. Damage to this lining can lead to intestinal permeability or 'leaky gut syndrome', where foreign substances are able to seep through, leading to a hypersensitive immune response. Leaky gut has long been associated with the development of allergies.

## Itchy dermatitis

Dermatitis is a collection of skin conditions where the skin becomes inflamed. Depending on the type of dermatitis, areas of skin may become red and itchy, with some acute attacks causing crusty scales or blisters that ooze fluid. Contact dermatitis is a localised rash or irritation caused by contact with a specific substance. Specific irritants could be body cleaning products, perfumes, makeup, household cleaning chemicals, synthetic material in clothes, laundry powder etc. Choosing more natural versions of the above or making your own products is often advised.

## Dry eczema

Atopic dermatitis, more commonly-known as eczema, is the most common form of dermatitis, especially in infants, where the skin becomes inflamed, dry and itchy. The skin provides a physical barrier against the environment and consists of a small number of microflora compared to the gut. This barrier is impaired in eczema, resulting in an abnormal inflammatory response to harmless environmental allergens or irritants such as chemicals and detergents. Dysbiosis, leaky gut and food allergies have been associated with the condition.

## Probiotic boost

In some studies, probiotic supplementation has been seen to rebalance the gut flora, improve immune function, reduce severity of skin symptoms and reduce the need for medication. One study in 2011, found that a multi-strain

### Try These Remedies

- BioKult Infantis from BioKult
- Salt of the Earth Natural Deodorant Spray from Crystal Spring
- Alore Skin Rescue Regenerating Elixir Oil from Pravera





probiotic (Protexin) significantly reduced eczema symptoms in infants and young children within just eight weeks. And back in 2001, another study found that a *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* probiotic given preventatively during pregnancy, and directly to infants for the first six months of life, halved the risk of the infants developing atopic eczema during the first two years of life.

## Blocked pores

While we all want to smell pleasant across the day, whatever activities come our way, it's becoming clear that some antiperspirant deodorants might not be as helpful as we first thought. We spoke to **Thomas Laird**, Managing Director of **Crystal Spring**, regarding the issue of blocked pores. Here's what Thomas said; "Conventional antiperspirants reduce body odour by using a synthetic ingredient (typically aluminium chlorohydrate) to block the skin's pores, and artificially impede one of the body's key physiological processes - sweat formation. Once applied to your body, this metal compound is absorbed into the skin, forming a physical 'plug' against the excretion of sweat. This obstruction disrupts the natural perspiration process, which your body uses as both a cooling mechanism, and a method of expelling toxins."

Thomas continues; "In addition to aluminium chlorohydrate, most conventional antiperspirants typically contain other synthetic components, such as parabens, triclosan and MI – materials commonly found in household cleaning products,

plastic containers and sanitisers. These ingredients, combined with the artificial 'plugging' of the skin's pores, can lead to skin irritation, inflammation and allergic reaction (contact dermatitis)."

## Psoriasis sufferers

Pre-existing skin complaints such as psoriasis can also be aggravated by antiperspirant use. In the case of inverse psoriasis (which causes large, sore red patches in skin folds or creases), identifying a deodorant which is effective in minimising body odour and yet does not aggravate the thin, delicate skin under the arms, breasts and around the groin, is absolutely vital to effectively managing psoriasis symptoms.

## Natural deodorants

In contrast to traditional antiperspirants, natural deodorants do not suffocate or 'plug' pores, but instead create an invisible layer of mineral salts (usually potassium alum) on the skin, inhibiting the growth of odour-causing bacteria. The result is long-lasting, effective protection, without impeding your skin's ability to breathe or expel toxins. By their very nature, natural deodorants do not contain synthetic ingredients like parabens, alcohol or aluminium chlorohydrate, and often enhance skin-calming properties with soothing aloe vera and antibacterial honeysuckle. If in doubt, the golden rule for those suffering from sensitive skin is to check the list of

ingredients contained in personal care and beauty products before you buy, choose those items with the least materials listed, and complete a patch test before applying in earnest.

## New anti-ageing skin care brand

It's perfectly natural to want to preserve your youthful looks for as long as possible. Award-winning, French natural and organic skin care brand **Alorée** is pleased to announce it has partnered with **Pravera Ltd**, one of the UK's leading distributors in the natural and organic skin care and cosmetics industry.

Alorée is currently the only skin care brand that has been able to extract the active ingredient chlorophyll from plants and capture its anti-ageing properties. We talked to **Graeme Hume**, MD of **Pravera Ltd**, about the benefits of chlorophyll for skin care. Here's what Graham said; "Over the last 12 to 18 months, much has been written about the cancer-fighting and healing benefits of chlorophyll present in green superfoods. Alorée is the first brand to use this much talked about ingredient in a skin care formulation."

The Alorée range consists of 14 skin care products certified according to the Ecocert organic standard, which indicates to consumers that the brand is truly natural, organic and free from parabens, silicones, petrochemicals and potentially harmful ingredients.

## Chlorophyll in action

Each product contains the unique chlorophyll-rich complex CHC (Chlorophyll Hordeum Complex), which has been researched and developed by Alorée's Founder, **Alexandra Croce**.

"I had a feeling that chlorophyll, which enables plants to capture energy from sunshine and is crucial to the photosynthesis process, had strong anti-ageing properties. In partnership with the University of Montpellier, I did extensive research into this area, and discovered that this was indeed the case", says Alexandra.

Chlorophyll cannot be extracted by itself from plants, which is why Alexandra developed the unique CHC serum. This complex contains chlorophyll from young organic barley shoots, as well as polyphenols, vitamin E, organic grape seed oil, organic camellina oil and organic muscat rosebush oil. It is high in antioxidants and helps to boost skin cell metabolism to leave the skin moisturised, brighter, rejuvenated and visibly younger. All the Alorée products in the range have been tested for their efficacy, and deliver proven anti-ageing results, which is undoubtedly why it's already a success in France. Let's hope our Brits catch on quick! **TH**