



Beauty Fix

This column provides answers to any of your queries on beauty, skin and body care. Send your questions to us at Faithlink@faithmc.org.sg. Questions should be concise and kept within 40 words. Hear out the views and initial assessments by our columnist, but remember to seek further professional advice if necessary! Ultimately, God looks at the beauty of our hearts, not just external beauty!

I understand there is an expiry date for cosmetics. Will they last longer and continue to be usable if they are kept in cool dry places?

All cosmetic products, including skincare products, should be kept in a cool and dry place. A lot of people like to keep skincare products in their refrigerator to extend its shelf life. However, this may cause the product to experience changes in temperature when taken out to use, especially when one forgets to put it back to the refrigerator. This may affect the product's stability.

For natural skincare products, a cosmetologist has to decide on the amount of preservative in a product, enough to make it "last," but without damaging its natural properties. Therefore, if the product is not kept in a consistently cool place, the product may spoil earlier than expected.

It is a common practice to put a manufacturing date or expiry date at the bottom of the product. In general, a product has a shelf life of three years, though I had been told by skincare product manufacturers that the products could still be in good condition even after their "expiry date."

In some European countries where cosmetic control is more stringent, skincare products need a "Product after Opening (PAO)" label, indicating how long it will last after using the product for the first time. In my personal opinion, PAO is a more accurate measure of a product's period of usability

because different products do have different "active" and "quality" periods. This depends on the ingredients. For example, a phyto (plant)-based serum usually has a shorter PAO as compared to a cleansing product, whose PAO is normally 12 months. This is because a serum should be highly active to remain effective, yet some of its precious ingredients will oxidise and degrade daily the day after the product is opened. Therefore, checking out the PAO label is one of the best ways to make sure the product you are using is still in good, functional condition.

The basic rule is that if you have kept the product for more than a year without opening, it should still be usable if the product is kept in a cool, dry place. If the product has been opened for more than a year, the product may not be safe for use. Always remember that you should not use the product if there is a change of smell, texture or colour. Furthermore, even if a product looks and smells normal, if it has exceeded its PAO, the product may no longer be functional. My advice is not to stockpile your skincare products because your skin condition changes all the time. What is suitable now may not be suitable in six or nine months' time.

I have tried so many eye creams to get rid of my dark eye circles and under-eye wrinkles, but nothing helps. Are there any natural therapies?



The causes of dark eye circles and under-eye wrinkles are different. While age is one of the main reasons, dark eye circles are due to certain factors.

The skin around the eyelids is thinner as compared to other parts of the skin on your body. When the skin looks pale (this may be due to tiredness, dehydration, poor blood circulation or lack of proper nutrients), the blood that flows through the veins under the eyelids bring out a bluish or violet tint (dark eye circles). As we age, the collagen of the skin decreases, and

the skin becomes thinner. This causes the dark eye circles to be even more visible. However, sometimes a so-called “dark eye circle” could be caused by the person’s deep-set bone structure, which casts a shadow just under the eye area.

We all know that under-eye wrinkles are formed when we age as our skin loses collagen and elasticity. Other causes of wrinkles include UV damage as well as the repeated daily motion of blinking.

In order to correct dark eye circles and wrinkles, a healthy lifestyle is one of the answers. Exercising, not smoking, eating healthily, drinking plenty of water and fruit juice, as well as resting sufficiently definitely reduce fatigue and increase blood circulation which will promote healthy skin tone.

Choosing suitable eye-care products that moisturise the skin around the eyes will protect the skin from dehydration and the action of free radicals. Rice oil, soy proteins and carrot extract strengthen the skin and prevent wrinkles. Vitamin C and E are strong antioxidants that enhance the production of collagen. Vitamin K derivatives are said to protect the blood capillaries which are useful in preventing dark eye circles.

As for treatments, gently massaging the eye areas in circular movements on a daily basis helps to enhance absorption of an eye-care product. Lymphatic drainage treatment drains stagnant fluids and improves the blood flow while reducing fatigue around the eyes. However, you may also try some old-fashioned home remedies, including placing used tea bags over tired eyes, or slices of cucumber or raw potatoes over closed eyelids. These methods may give some temporary relief to tired eyelids.

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By SHIRLEY MOK

Shirley has been working in the beauty care industry since 1994. She received Christ at age 18 in Hong Kong, and her family (husband and two kids) are members of Heritage PCM. Her desire is to lead a balanced and abundant life, she is amazed at how skin reacts and heals, affirming that God is indeed a most wonderful Creator.