



# They **GROOM UP** *so fast*

By Diandra Soliano

First come training bras, then comes puppy love. Then come serums, eye creams, creams and a lovely spa package.

**A**t what age should your teenager start taking care of her skin the way we grown-ups do? Dr. Christina Cheah who runs an aesthetics, skin and wellness clinic answers your questions.



**Q** "My 13 year old daughter has started pinching some of my moisturiser. Should I get her one of her own?"

- Grace, 47

**Dr. C:** Yes, you should get her a moisturiser which suits her skin type and condition, especially if it is anti-ageing, whitening or skin-firming moisturiser she's been pinching. At her age, she most probably has oily skin that is prone to acne breakouts, and overly-hydrating formulas can worsen this condition. If your teen has normal, oily or acne prone skin, she may not need moisturiser at all. If your daughter does in fact need moisturiser, look for a non-comedogenic or oil-free formula. For dry or sensitive skin, or skin prone to eczema, hypoallergenic formulas which are usually fragrance and colour-free are best.

**Q** "My acne is mild, but I'm afraid that it will develop. What should I do?"

- Liz, 15

**Dr. C:** Acne usually occurs during adolescence and earlier for girls than boys, however it may resolve by your mid 20s but it can also begin for the first time in your 30s and 40s, especially with females. There is no one-time permanent cure for acne and proper maintenance is important as acne can recur. Opt for non-comedogenic, non-drying, oil-free products which will not clog your pores.



You also want to avoid using hair products with an oily consistency that may come in contact with the face. If you have an oily scalp, you should wash your hair regularly as well. Squeezing, picking, extracting, scratching or rubbing acne may lead to more inflammation and scarring. If you have begun using make-up, do ensure you remove all of it from your skin before going to bed.

**Q** "When is it ok to begin using anti-ageing products?" - Diana, 23

**Dr. C:** Simply applying a basic moisturiser and sun block are already considered 'anti-ageing'. A more advanced or complete regime includes firming, lifting or anti-wrinkle creams, but these can aggravate or trigger acne especially with the humid Malaysian weather. You should not suddenly begin a complete anti-aging regime; rather make a gradual shift of skincare products from teenage to adulthood to middle and old age.

**Q** "I'm under the hot sun at school every day. Should I be using sun block? I don't want to suffocate my skin." - Sofia, 17

**Dr. C:** Sun block should be applied when one is outdoors or under the hot sun for long hours, especially in tropical countries like Malaysia. Sun damage is cumulative from a tender age which causes premature ageing of the skin. The right sun block will not suffocate your skin. Choose one that comes with a broad spectrum formula

(which blocks both UVA and UVB rays), an appropriate SPF and preferably non-comedogenic. Some sun blocks sold in the market offer protection for just UVB rays and are not adequate protection against UVA rays which are the real culprit for sun ageing. You can also select gel, lotion, spray or cream textures to suit your skin type. Water-resistant formulas should be used only for sports, especially water sports.

**Q** "I've heard exfoliating will make my skin glow. How can I do this safely?" - Rae, 16

**Dr. C:** Exfoliation involves removal of old dead skin on the skin's outermost surface. It helps to enhance skin renewal which can be slowed due to stress, hormonal changes or ageing, thus making the skin glow in health. Those with very sensitive skin should not attempt any exfoliation on their own. Mechanical exfoliants to consider include micro-bead scrubs, sugar or salt crystals, while chemical ones contain fruit enzymes, AHA, BHA or combined. Remember that some hair removal techniques like waxing, threading and shaving also have exfoliating effects. One has to be careful with exfoliating immediately or soon after doing hair removal.

## BEAUTYFEATURE - THEY GROOM UP SO FAST

**Q** "Am I too young for a facial?" –Siew Lee, 15

**Dr. C:** Yes, you are too young to start a facial. It is not necessary at this age. The extraction can be too harsh or aggressive leading to breakout of acne, inflammation or even scarring. Instead you should adopt a proper basic skin regime for your face. The basic steps include cleansing, toning and moisturising with products suitable for your skin type and problem. Sometimes normal skin does not require much more than cleansing at a young age.



**Q** "At 14, what should my daughter's skincare routine consist of?" – Nina, 49

**Dr. C:** It can consist of three basic steps; cleansing, toning, which is optional, and moisturising. Sun block should be applied if the skin is exposed to UV rays for long hours. The most basic essential is proper cleansing of the face which should be cultivated around the time of puberty as hormonal changes can affect skin dramatically. If your daughter has any persistent skin problems which are serious enough to upset her, please seek

professional help from doctors who can recommend or prescribe the correct skincare products and treatments.

**Q** "I know you shouldn't mix and match your products, so how will I know what's good and what isn't for my skin?" – Syikin, 18

**Dr. C:** It is difficult for most teenagers to choose the right products as it is not easy to understand the scientific names of listed ingredients, and to resist in believing all the advertisements and claims; unless one has normal skin which makes it easier to care for. Do not mix and match too many different products especially when trying them out for the first time. There is a possibility of allergy, irritation and bad reactions caused by applying the wrong products together. What is best for you really depends on your skin type and problem. Consult a doctor when indicated.

dry skin, you start on a hydrating serum which suits your needs at this age. There is no right age to start using a serum; it all depends on your skin type and condition, and of course the affordability!

**Q** "Should I already be applying eye cream to prevent ageing?" – Menisha, 18

**Dr. C:** The area around the eyes is the first to show signs of ageing, thus eye care is vital. Generally one can start in your 20s, earlier or later depending on the skin type and condition. Those with dry or sensitive skin should start earlier while those with oily skin may start later, in your 30s. If you have sensitive skin or are prone to eczema, go for hypoallergenic types usually prescribed by doctors. H&B



**Q** "At what age should I start applying a serum?" – Carey, 17

**Dr. C:** The age to start applying serums depend on your skin type and condition. If you have healthy or normal skin, you do not need any serum at this age! If you have very

