

# skin reaction to internal and external influences

## M edication and vitamins

**1. Birth Control Pills** may affect the skin by causing hyperpigmentation and clients may see a change in the amount of acne breakouts they get.

This is of special interest with a client who may never have experienced acne in her teens, but is seeing frequent breakouts after discontinuing a pill high in estrogen, or starting a pill high in androgens.

**2. Antihistamines**, which are so often taken by those clients suffering allergic reactions and sinus congestion, may cause excessive dehydration on the skin surface, and some are reactive with ultraviolet light.

**3. Antibiotics**, and in particular the tetracycline so often given for acne, cause increased sensitivity to ultraviolet light.

**4. Steroids**, especially cortisone, can in some cases cause a certain type of "acne," which is in fact an inflammation of the follicles.

**5. Medicines containing bromides and diiodides**, as found in many cold remedies, can cause acne breakouts.

Similar acne-type lesions are caused by certain barbiturates and high doses of Vitamin B12.

**6. Clients having a pre-disposition to acne** should screen their vitamins for kelp, seaweed or straight iodine (potassium iodide), and eliminate these from their intake.

## environmental pollution

**1. The effects of environmental pollution** are seen on the skin in both obvious and subtle ways. Oriental diagnosis believes the lungs and skin to be sister organs, and this does seem to bear out when the skin of a person living in high pollution is viewed. In Los Angeles, where our smog is world-renowned, there is a very high incidence of skin sensitivity and allergic reactions.



**2. A client who complains of sinus problems** very often has broken capillaries over cheekbones, and pressure around nose and eyebrows.

**3. The actual amount of grime** in the atmosphere of a polluted environment contributes to the need for scrupulous cleansing of the skin, as it leads to congestion and breakouts if not cleansed thoroughly every day. High levels of sulfur and ozone in the smog-type pollution

also lead to dry, irritated skin conditions and resulting hypersensitive skin.

**4. Within the topic of pollution must come smokers**, who by the reason that they inhale toxic fumes, are creating their own personal pollution.

**5. Within the subject of the environment must come the effects of sunlight.** "Favre-Racouchots" disease, or "senile comedones," is generally felt to be a result of extreme sun damage. It is characterized by groups of blackheads and sometimes yellowish nodules commonly occurring in both cheeks and the area next to the eyes, in men. These areas may also be extremely wrinkled.

## dental work, x-rays and anesthesia

**1. Excessive dental work** may result in broken capillaries (couperose), on the crest of the cheekbone. The side on which this occurs will correspond to the side on which the work was done. This seems to be especially obvious after wisdom teeth extraction, due to the amount of manipulation and trauma to the face during the procedure.

**2. After dental anesthesia by injection**, an increase in sensitivity to the skin may be noticed. Again, the sensitive areas will correspond to the side on which the dental work was performed.

**3. X-rays inhibit sebaceous gland activity.** The client may

notice a marked decrease in the amount of oil production, and breakouts of the skin after dental X-rays.

## stress and lifestyle pressure

**1. Stress** has long been known to influence and aggravate acne breakouts. So often we think of this as being major stress, when in fact it can be as simple as being "uptight." When stress occurs, the hypothalamus stimulates the pituitary gland to produce more hormones. One of the androgens stimulate the sebaceous glands of the skin, causing them to produce more oil.

**2. Based on the effects that stress has on the adrenal glands**, it also influences the production of adrenaline, cortisone and the male hormone, testosterone.

A great many clients under stress, display the classic effects of adrenal stress. These effects include hyperpigmentation on the face, an increase in the amount of coarseness or length of the facial and body hair, and acne-type breakouts.

## menstruation and pregnancy

**1. Menstruation** predisposes the skin to reactions because of the abnormal hormonal balance (excess and then decrease in the production of folliculin, increase of androgens).

The esthetician must remember that menstruation will predispose the client to allergies, and reactions to pressure (massage), pain (waxing), and heat (paraffin, steaming, etc.).

Menstruation is accompanied by a hypersecretion of the sebaceous glands, explaining why clients are more susceptible to oiliness and breakouts.

A greater sensitivity to light during the period also contributes to increased sunburn and sensitivity around the eyes.

**2. During pregnancy**, scars may darken, and extraction work may leave pigmented marks on the skin. Vascular spiders, those small red blood vessels on the face, neck, chest and arms may show up during the second to fifth month, and disappear after delivery.

## elimination and digestion

**1. Excessive use of diuretics and laxatives** will cause the skin to become dehydrated.

Caffeine, antihistamines and cold remedies are all very dehydrating to the body, as is a bout of vomiting or diarrhea.

**2. The skin being an organ of elimination**, aids the kidneys in releasing wastes from the body. In the Orient, they believe skin diseases such as psoriasis, eczema and acne to be a result of kidney and elimination problems, and if the kidneys are treated, the skin will clear up. It is also believed that the appearance of gravelly "goose flesh" on the backs of the arms and back is evidence of excess uric acid in the system, and better elimination is needed.

**3. The quality of the skin** depends largely on the quality of the blood and lymph responsible for nourishing and detoxinating it. Metabolic wastes build up in the tissues, causing a decrease in oxygen absorption. This condition can be aided in the salon with dietary advice from a nutritionist, and treatments. Manual Lymphatic Drainage would be indicated and the use of essential oils for detoxination.

## health problems and medical background

**1. Diabetic clients** have a skin with a poor healing quality, and as such, we must be very careful when performing extraction work as the skin may bleed easily, and bruise quickly. Diabetics can also suffer extreme redness of the face

and increased skin infections, boils and pustules.

**2. Thyroid conditions** affect the skin, and thyroid hormones are responsible for the production of connective tissue in the lower layers of the skin, and the secretion of skin sebum. An overactive thyroid condition acts on the skin by causing it to become thin, moist or covered with sweaty fine hair. An underactive thyroid gland shows up as rough, dry skin with decreased sweat and hair growth.

**3. Liver diseases** such as yellow jaundice increase the skin's susceptibility to bruising, and the amount of spider naevi (red dilated blood vessels).

## conclusion

The purpose of this article is not to provide an exhaustive account of skin manifestations, indeed there have been many excellent books written on that subject. I hope it will remind us that much of what we see on the skin surface is due to a systemic or external reason, and not always the result of a product application.

So often, I see estheticians and clients who want to find the answer to all skin problems in a product, and also maybe blame that product if a reaction occurs.

Above all, let us at last all realize that these skin manifestations of systematic and external effects show us that we cannot treat a part of our bodies without affecting the whole.

As we are continually teaching at our post-graduate training center "Treat the whole person not just the particular symptoms that show on the skin."