



SKIN MYTH BUSTER!

It's a myth that all skin types are the same and will respond to different treatments the same way!

Have you ever wondered why, after spending the same amount of money and going for the same treatments as your friends, you do not get the same results? The answer is simple — it is a myth that all skin types are the same and will respond to different treatments the same way! The laser treatment that did wonders for your friend might be totally ineffective for you, simply because your friend may have a lighter skin tone than you. One of the most important steps skin care specialists have to take into consideration when developing an effective treatment programme for you, is to analyse your skin and your skin type.

Aesthetic doctors and skincare specialists use skin analysis and classification to formulate the appropriate treatment for individuals to ensure optimized results and prevent possible adverse reactions due to the fact that we all have individual differences in our skins based on the interaction of genetic and environmental factors. Through proper skin analysis aesthetic doctors will be able to assess levels of hydration, luminosity, texture, tone and colour, as well as the identification of skin problems such as acne, blackheads, rosacea, pigmentation, oily skin, skin sensitivity, wrinkles, pores and sun damage.

One diagnostic tool often used in skin analysis and classification is the Woods lamp or the Visia skin analysis device. In a totally dark room the deep violet light of the Woods lamp is applied to the skin. Different substances on the skin's surface become luminous under the Woods lamp which helps to distinguish normal healthy skin from damaged and dry skin. In addition, hormonal pigmentation can be identified and classified as either being epidermal or dermal in nature, an important classification for effective treatment.

Another method of classification is the Fitzpatrick classification where skin types are assessed for suitability for laser treatment and classified as skin types I, II, III, IV, V and VI. For instance, when visiting a skincare clinic in order to treat and improve sun damage, the Fitzpatrick classification for Sun Reactive Skin Type will be used, because it takes into account the amount of melanin content in the skin, as well as the capacity of the skin to produce melanocytes in response to sunlight. The aesthetic doctor will factor in the effect of your specific skin type before choosing the correct laser treatment for you. They will also identify your risk for adverse reaction related to the pigment in your skin. Many lasers, especially hair removal and pigmentation lasers, can interact with the melanin in an individual's skin.

The different skin types, identified by the Fitzpatrick classification, react differently to the environment and therefore need different products, treatments and active skin care ingredients.

People with skin type I are usually pale, with blonde or red hair,

freckled with blue eyes and likely to experience severe sun damage from ultra-violet exposure. They usually burn easily, without ever having a tan.

This skin type is believed to be highly susceptible to premature ageing and skin cancers (including melanoma, the deadliest type of skin cancer) and people with this type are therefore advised to take extreme care, use sunscreen and protect themselves from harmful UV rays. Extreme sun exposure can result in serious damage, premature ageing and skin cancers such as squamous cell carcinoma SCC, Basal Cell Carcinoma BCC and Melanoma. Best skin practices for type I skin are to minimise sun damage by using products containing titanium dioxide, zinc oxide or avobenzone. Internal skin protection can be obtained with supplements such as Polypodium leucotomas and Pycnogenol® that will offer sun protection, increase resistance against sun damage and offer protection against sun cancers.

In contrast people with skin type VI have a dark skin colour and are usually of African descent. Chronic sun exposure in this skin type leads to uneven skin tone and pigmentation. Skin type VI also reacts differently and at times more severely to common conditions such as acne, eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis and seborrheic dermatitis (dandruff) which can lead to potential problems with pigmentation, uneven darkening or lightening of skin colour due to the stimulation of melanin, a dynamic process which responds briskly to various stimuli. This results in the skin being more reactive to an impact which can lead to dark marks called post inflammatory hyperpigmentation (PIH). PIH may take years to fade thus wearing a sunscreen daily is essential to prevent PIH. Best skin practices for skin type VI are to stay out of the sun during the peak hours of 10:00 – 16:00 and to wear a SPF 15 - 30 sunscreen every day.

Despite best efforts with bleaching agents and exfoliation treatments, pigmentation from PIH can be stubborn and long lasting. The new pigmentation peptides and other active ingredients such as arbutin, kojic acid and nicotinamide can be used safely and will not cause the sensitivity that is associated with traditional lightening/fading creams such as retinoic acid and hydroquinone. If pigmentation fails to respond to topical depigmenting agents then it may be necessary to have in-office treatment with appropriate chemical peels and the Laser Genesis procedure with a long pulsed Nd: YAG which is safe for all skin types including skin type VI.

Next time you walk into a skin care clinic, make sure that your skin is analyzed by the skin care specialist before any treatment programme is started. Visit www.skinrenewal.co.za ✨