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smart solutions
balancing lives

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de-clutter your
bathroom p18



celia teh
"I can't wait to
get pregnant"

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every day

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smart ways
to be nice...
to those who aren't

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FOR ANY
PROBLEM

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YOUR WORK YOUR WAY

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= HAPPIER KIDS



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WORTH \$178 EACH

10

no-fuss ways to
realign your soul

ROAD TESTS
HANDHELD MASSAGERS
7KG+ WASHING MACHINES
STICK BLENDERS
BABYSITTING SERVICES

shine's not fine

How oily your T-zone gets by lunchtime is dictated by your genes. But there are no-fuss ways to control shine, says **MARY LIM.**

It's post-lunchtime and you're in the washroom blotting and powdering away. All over Singapore, other women are doing the same and griping about the shine on their faces.

It's a common complaint. By some genetic fluke, Asians seem to be more prone to oily skin. And what havoc it wreaks, especially in our humidity, which causes oil glands to become overactive.

"Oiliness is a reaction to external influences," says Farida Daoud, vice-president of Lierac Laboratories. "That's why women in countries like Singapore and Hong Kong experience higher sebum levels."

What all this excess sebum does is darken foundation and compromise the staying powder of your makeup. Excess sebum can also lead to problems like acne, clogged pores and dull skin. Our humid heat also makes you perspire which, when left to dry, can lead to breakouts.

Some women also experience shine because of androgen, a male hormone that leads to increased sebum production, causing acne.

Dr Yeak Hwee Lee, a senior family physician and aesthetics practitioner at Raffles Hospital, says: "Hormone fluctuations influence the amount of oil produced by sebaceous glands. That's why some women experience acne outbreaks before or during menstruation."

If your oily skin condition is serious and you are not trying to get pregnant, your doctor may prescribe Diane 35, an oral contraceptive that blocks the effect of androgen on the skin. But results can take up to three months and, as with any oral contraceptive, may have side effects.

For most women though, shine can be managed with over-the-counter products. Dr Low Chai Ling, an aesthetic physician from The Sloane Clinic, says: "Go for cleansers and lotions with benzoyl peroxide, a chemical that increases skin cell renewal and clears pores and is commonly used to treat acne.

"Another useful ingredient is beta hydroxy acid (BHA) or salicylic acid, which helps slough off skin cells, preventing pores from clogging up."

However, over-the-counter products offer only short-term oil control. For long-lasting benefits of up to six months, dermatologists recommend in-clinic treatments, especially for those with acne scarring.

For an instant, lifted, shine-free appearance, there is Mesobotox, which comprises a series of miniscule injections of vitamins and Botulinum Toxin solution into oil glands to reduce shine and oil. Another procedure is the Aramis laser, which uses light energy to shrink oil glands and reduce acne scars.

Next, come the peels, which exfoliate skin's problem spots. While the alpha beta peel uses a combination of alpha hydroxy acid (AHA) and BHA fruit acids to burn off dead cells, the laser peel treatment uses laser energy to remove damaged or wrinkled skin, layer by layer.

For those who swear by mattifying makeup, know that this is not a solution. La Mer's marketing manager Cynthia Ng says: "While these products help control excess sebum, it's more important to adopt a good skincare regime, eat healthily and maintain overall well-being to achieve radiant, luminous skin." **SH**

5 SHINE MYTHS DEBUNKED!

The experts tell it like it is.

SOAP IS THE BEST CLEANSER FOR OILY SKIN. "Cleansing agents in soap have almost similar ingredients to that of washing detergent and are too harsh for facial skin. They are too drying and can cause irritation," explains Farida Daoud, vice-president of Lierac Laboratories.

GREASY FOODS CAUSE OILINESS AND PIMPLES. Oily skin has nothing to do with diet, says Dr Wong Soon Tee, consultant dermatologist at Raffles Hospital. Acne occurs when cells shed from a sebaceous gland stick together to clog the gland, resulting in a pimple.

DON'T MOISTURISE IF YOU HAVE OILY SKIN. Dr Low Chai Ling, an aesthetic physician from The Sloane Clinic, points out that just because skin is oily doesn't mean it doesn't need moisture, which keeps skin supple and balances out oil production.

BLOT FREQUENTLY TO KEEP SHINE AT BAY. Use tissue blotters only when necessary. "Excessive blotting leaves skin too dry, thus allowing sebaceous glands to overcompensate by producing more oil," says Dr Yeak Hwee Lee, aesthetics practitioner at Raffles Hospital.

WASH YOUR FACE MORE OFTEN IF IT'S OILY. Over-washing dries out the skin, making it more irritated and oily. Dr Low points out: "This can cause acne as the oil remains trapped beneath the dry flaky layer and becomes inflamed."