

A BOOST IN A BOTTLE

DIY bustboosters are cheaper than surgery, but are they effective?

Sagging, wrinkly breasts used to be a real drag in the life of accountant Kee Chong Ching, 42. She wished for a bust-boosting cure that didn't involve the pain of going under the knife. And she was unwilling to go for treatments at beauty salons because she was too shy to expose her body.

But now, there's more bounce in her walk. Five months ago, she was introduced to Activa Blossom Bust Self-Heating Mask, an at-home treatment designed to smoothen and firm the décolleté area in 30 seconds.

She swears that after the first treatment, her husband "tested the results", and reported her breasts were firmer and smoother.

But those who believe the path to a beautiful bosom lies in the form of a miracle cream should "take the claims with a pinch of salt", says Dr Low Chai Ling, medical director of The Sloane Clinic, which specialises in beauty treatments.

Her concern is that a tingling sensation or reddening can be wrongly mistaken for the product working its magic.

But she warns: "Most times, this is actually an allergic reaction", and in some cases, "could be potentially very severe and uncomfortable".

And Dr Ang Por, a consultant dermatologist with Dermatology Associates, says "there is no evidence that any of these bust-boosting creams work".

Her rationale is that ingredients which claim to firm and expand the breasts, such as collagen, cannot be absorbed into the skin.

At most, she says "they probably have moisturising properties".

In her opinion, the best non-invasive way of increasing the bust size, or lifting the bust, is to "use a push-up or padded bra, which at least gives an instant effect".

Whatever the doctors' views, there are scores of bust-boosting products on the market which claim to lift, enlarge and firm in as little as two weeks.

Josephine Lim, a training manager at French beauty brand Sisley, says her company's Phytobust Intensive Bust Compound is effective, thanks to a special blend of three essential oils — marjoram, juniper and verbena — in the formula.

"These oils allow the skin-tightening ingredients horsetail and tormentil to penetrate the hyperdermis of the breast, where the fatty tissue and muscle lie," she says, claiming that results can be seen in about a month.

But perhaps the best decision customers can make is to not expect a miracle cure.

Which is why Kee is happy to continue with her bi-weekly bust masks, even though she knows the results are short-term.

"There's no pain and it's simple to apply," she says.

"It's a small price to pay for being able to wear tops with plunging necklines."

LEONG SU-LIN