

Sensitive Souls

Treating sensitive skin

By Sibby Macbain

Sensitive skin is on the increase, so now more than ever it is vital that you cater for clients who need special attention. Particularly during the winter months, skin takes a beating from the elements and needs special care and attention.

According to **Dermalogica**, clinical studies indicate that there is an increasing worldwide trend (up to 53%) toward sensitive skin in the past few years, with people who do not have a genetic predisposition to clinically sensitive skin finding that their skin is nevertheless becoming 'sensitised' – irritable, stressed or unable to repair itself.

"As the outside temperature falls the central heating in our homes, offices and cars increases," explains Kelly Quinn, Regional Education Manager at the **International Dermal Institute®**.

"For a sensitive skin this leads to a cocktail of dryness, redness, irritation and itching due to an impaired barrier function. This occurs when the cells and lipids that prevent moisture loss are damaged. In effect, the extreme changes in temperature makes our skin dry and dehydrated which leads to gaps in our skin's own protective outer layers. This means that potential irritants can enter the epidermis reaching the dermis to cause histamine release or full immune system response."

Jane Durant of Harbourne Products, UK distributors of **Pier Augé**, agrees:

"Sensitive skin requires caution, as it is easily stimulated and sensitive to climate changes," she says. "The emphasis when treating a sensitive skin should be on calming to maintain the balance of the skin; therefore harsh facial exfoliants or scrubs are not recommended." According to Jane, sensitive skin can be recognised by high colour, dilated capillaries and dry, irritated or flaking areas. It may also be taut and thin with a tendency to wrinkles.

Of course, there are various skin conditions that can be aggravated by harsh ingredients and need to be treated gently. Some of these are thought to be hereditary whilst others may be caused by external factors. It's important that you can recognise the signs of a skin condition; even if you feel it is beyond your treatment realm as a beauty therapist, you can at least urge your client to visit a dermatologist for advice if they have not already done so.

Spotlight on skin

Acne

Acne tends to run in families and can be triggered by: hormonal changes, pregnancy, the contraceptive pill or stress. It may also be caused by using greasy or oily cosmetic and hair products, as well as certain drugs; for example, steroids. Acne occurs when the sebaceous glands produce too much oil and the pores become clogged, thus accumulating dirt, debris, and bacteria. Acne can range from plugged pores such as blackheads or white heads, to pimples to deeper, more unsightly lumps or nodules.

Acne commonly appears on the face and shoulders, but may also occur on the body, arms, legs, and buttocks. Whilst acne is most common in teenagers, it can happen at an age – and these days adult acne is quite common.

Eczema

Also referred to as atopic dermatitis, eczema is a very common, long-lasting condition that affects the skin. Usually affected areas become extremely itchy and scratching then leads to redness, swelling and cracking as well as weeping of clear fluid. This then leads to crusting and scaling. Sometimes a person's eczema may be worse, after which it usually clears up for a while before another flare-up.

Erythema

Erythema multiforme is a type of allergic reaction that occurs in response to medications, infections, or illness.

The exact cause is unknown, but it is believed to involve damage to the blood vessels of the skin with subsequent damage to skin tissues. The disorder occurs primarily in children and young adults.

Erythema multiforme may become noticeable with a classic skin lesion, with or without systemic (whole body) symptoms.

Medications associated with erythema multiforme include sulfonamides, penicillins, barbiturates, and phenytoin.

Psoriasis

Psoriasis is believed to be an immune-related disorder, which affects males and females equally and can occur at different levels of severity. The experts believe that it occurs when the immune system sends faulty signals that speed up the growth cycle in skin cells. Generally speaking, psoriasis can occur on the knees, elbows, scalp, hands, feet or lower back, and it appears as raised red skin covered with a flaky white build up. There are some types of psoriasis where the affected area looks pimples or burned.

Psoriasis is genetic and can develop at any age, but is it not contagious so touching the affected area carries no risk of infection. In severe cases, the disease can be quite distressing for the sufferer as it can cause irritation and discomfort.

Rosacea

Rosacea is a chronic skin condition involving inflammation of the cheeks, nose, chin, forehead, or eyelids. It may manifest as redness, prominent spider-like blood vessels, swelling, or skin eruptions similar to acne.

The redness may appear in certain areas or cover the entire face, whilst sufferers may have a tendency to flush or blush easily. The nose may appear red and bulbous, whilst they may experience acne-like skin eruptions. Sufferers may experience a burning or stinging sensation of the face and irritated, bloodshot, watery eyes. Rosacea is harmless but can sufferers can find the condition embarrassing and uncomfortable.

People who are more likely to suffer from Rosacea include those with fair skin; those who blush easily, those who are female and are between the ages of 30 and 50. However, male sufferers tend to suffer more severely with the condition if it develops.

A sensitive issue...

Dermologica's Climate Control is a therapeutic balm, which helps heal acutely damaged facial skin whilst providing a protective shield against further climatic assaults.

The final layer in protective skin care, Climate Control contains shea butter to restore the skin's barrier and lock in vital moisture whilst Vitamin E, wheatgerm and oat extract soothe and repair skin damage. To protect against further assault, this on-the-move facial protector also includes anit-ozonate complex of furmity, fumaric acid and lemon extract, whilst lavender extract provides antiseptic application.

Packaged in a take-anywhere stick applicator, this powerful formula goes a long way to shield facial skin from chapping, inflammation and dryness. It is ideal for dry or cold climates or work in air-conditioned environments, and can also be used during sports such as skiing, as an insulator when outside in extreme climates, on chapped nostrils and lips and areas of irritation and as a therapeutic balm on broken, sore skin from psoriasis or eczema.

Climate Control is part of Dermalogica's Environmental Control System which provides a solution to sensitised skin by using ingredients which gently soothe, hydrate and repair damaged skin, optimise its natural barriers and protect from future assaults. The product range incorporates UltraCalming Cleanser For Face and Eyes, Soothing Protection Spray and Barrier Repair.

Designed for environmentally sensitised skin, Dermalogica's Carrier Repair is a unique anhydrous moisturiser that melts gently into the skin to soothe and help to repair damage from environmental aggression.

The Anti-Ozonate Complex shields the skin from environmental stress. Evening Primrose Oil strengthens the skin's natural lipid barrier, helping to prevent future assault. Emollient Silicones provide a velvety feel, whilst Shea Butter, Vitamin C and Bisabolol combat free radicals and moisture loss. Carrier Repair is also ideal for men after shaving to reduce irritation.

Germaine de Cappucini's Sensitive Skin range contains Gamma Oryzanol, which is anti-inflammatory and helps to bring down high colour, plus Bisabolol to soothe and combat irritation. The Silk Proteins contained within the range help to smooth the skin. The range is ideal for men and women who have sensitive and easily irritated skin, and comprises Cleansing Milk, Facial Skin Toner to balance the skin's pH levels, protective Response Cream offering protection and moisturisation, and Nutritive Response Cream, to leave skin looking 'well-rested' and calm.

Pier Augé offers a full range of treatment products for a sensitive, irritated skin and in particular the Delicate Facial Treatment, which uses essential oils specifically with calming and soothing properties.

Pier Augé facial begins with the correct cleanser and toner to suit a sensitive skin, before active Essentiel Complex Apaisant is applied via facial massage. This complex is a combination of essential oils of Helichrysum, Lavender, German Chamomile and Rosemary. The treatment mask, Masque Essentiel Apaisant, which contains highly active ingredients to ensure maximum benefits are obtained from the treatment, is applied to the whole face and neck. As it dries to a rubbery consistency the active Essentiel Complex Apaisant is forced into the skin by the occlusive action of the mask.

Masque Essentiel Apaisant gives visual relief to irritated skins with dilated capillaries, congestion and irritability through its calming and healing ingredients such as German Chamomile and algae extracts.

For home care, Pier Augé recommends Soin Essentiel Apaisant - specifically for irritated skins and those with a poor circulation or couperose, and Fluide Essentiel Apaisant is a light fluid moisturiser that combines essential oils of Immortelle and Lavender with active plant extracts, together with Shea Butter and regenerating Jojoba.

Biodroga offers a variety of products for sensitive clients and for those whose skin is temporarily stressed (sensitised). These include Cleansing Oil; a water-soluble oil that preserves the skin's own protective acid mantle and the skin's biological equilibrium. Lotion mild soothes, refreshes and improves the skin's resistance to irritating environmental influences, whilst Mild Peeling gently removes rough, scaly skin and refines the skin's surface.

Sensitive Concentrate ensures ideal tolerance by the skin and alleviates redness and irritation. It can be used under a day moisturiser or a professional mask during a treatment. Creme mask helps to calm and prevents irritations, whilst Oxygen Formula includes day and night care for sallow, sensitive skin. Finally, Anti-Time Formula aims to regain firmness and elasticity to mature, dry and sensitive skin

Dr Baumann uses only skin compatible ingredients, vegetable oils, vitamins and crucially, multi-layered liposomes in its skincare resulting in lasting compatibility. Whilst there can be no absolute guarantee that allergic reactions will not occur, by selecting ingredients on the basis of `scientific knowledge, Dr Baumann feel they can minimise the risk of such reactions and lay the foundations for a range of products that are tolerated by all skin types. Perfumes in particular, and a number of chemical preservatives, are some of the most common causes of allergies to cosmetics, which is why the company avoids using these in its product line.

Dr Baumann Cosmetic has conducted a great deal of research to ensure that all products are unperfumed and yet have a pleasant smell, and are without chemical preservatives and yet keep well. The products contain no animal ingredients, nor are they tested on animals.

Available from **Beauty Express**, Skintruth™ Soothing range by Professional Beauty Systems is a range of products developed especially for sensitive skin conditions. The key ingredients in the range are Chamomile and Lavender. Chamomile possesses anti-inflammatory properties and Lavender is a natural antiseptic, which calms and soothes sensitive skin leaving it feeling soft and supple. The products can be used on the most delicate skin conditions and are also great starting products for teenagers.

The range consists of: a cleanser; facial wash; toner; moisturiser and mask, and the products are available in both salon and retail sizes.

Skintruth™ also has a range of collagen masks and the Allantoin and Panthenol advanced treatment mask has been developed especially for irritated and hypersensitive skin. The mask has a regenerating effect on the natural resistance of the skin, making it less likely to incur irritation, and will appear more even and supple over a course of treatments. The skin's moisture balance is stabilised by the addition of Panthenol and vitamin B5.

Sensitive and easily irritated skin can relax with the new Harmonie range from Anesi, available from **Smart Buy**. Ingredients such as Gingko Biloba, Liquorice, Red Vine, Aloe Vera, Horse Chestnut and Vitamin E help soothe and calm the skin giving a relaxing look with strength and self-protection ability and hydration. These promote skin harmony and encourage a healthy, glowing and balanced complexion.

Microdermabrasion may not be a treatment you might usually consider offering to a client with added sensitivity, but Skinforlife has now created a microdermabrasion system specifically designed for sensitive, thinner and pigmented skins.

Skinforlife organic microderm uses organic resurfacing grains for a gentle yet effective microdermabrasion alternative.

Although the exact formula is kept secret, the grains are derived primarily from crushed walnut shell, fruit pits, sunflower stalks, spruce and beech wood, which are rich in lignins and cellulose.

Lignins - a macromolecular constituent of wood, and cellulose - a wood pulp preparation, help to maintain the pH balance of the skin and are both becoming increasingly recognized for their therapeutic properties.

This exclusive blend of organic fibres allows for the absorption of micronutrients during the exfoliation process. The grains, which are not sharp or hard are light in colour and weight and are 100% natural. Skinforlife organic microderm helps to stimulate collagen production and skin resurfacing, producing a highly-polished, light-reflective finish.

Masks & moisturisers

According to the IDI's Kelly Quinn:

"Moisturisers are vital to every skin care regimen, regardless of skin condition. They help to protect the skin's natural defences against the environment while controlling moisture loss from the skin." Kelly points out that moisturising becomes even more important as we age, when the stratum corneum's natural moisturising factor becomes less effective at regulating the skin's water balance.

In order to ensure sensitive skin is getting optimum protection, recommend a specific product to your clients; one that has been designed to moisturise without irritation or harsh ingredients.

For example, new Avoplex Fragrance-Free Moisture Replenishing Lotion from **OPI** is formulated with the company's Advanced Avocado Lipid Complex, antioxidant Vitamin C, Allantoin and Aloe to revitalise, soothe and condition dry skin – just like its regular formula lotion. Perfect for hands and all-over body use and suitable for sensitive skin, Avoplex Fragrance-Free Moisture Replenishing Lotion is also ideal for male clients and those who prefer a non-fragranced lotion when wearing other fragranced products.

For sensitive skin, **Environ** recommends Début, a light preservative, fragrance and colorant free moisturiser, which is a starter cream for new vitamin A product users. Début contains an effective but restricted dose of vitamin A, formulated to accustom the cell receptors to the treatment, stimulating the production of more receptors, and enabling the user to graduate to the higher levels of vitamin A delivered by Environ's established products. It also contains protective antioxidant vitamins, C, E and beta-carotene to help counteract inflammatory effects. Debut excludes sunscreen chemicals – ingredients that can be a problem for those with easily reactive skin. Regular use of Environ creams results in radiant, smooth, healthy skin.

Crème 83 from **Yon-ka** contains calendula and essential oils, and is the perfect solution for fragile skin that tends to dry easily. It helps calm and comfort irritated skin

while imparting softness and vibrancy. It protects from harmful environmental aggressions thereby desensitising and reducing tightness. Your day and night creams can then be customised with Dermal 3, a skin-boosting concentrate from Yon-ka containing blackcurrant and raspberry extracts. This hydrating fluid amazingly helps magnify the hydrating power of your client's morning and evening creams. It is ideal for eliminating taut, rough skin and fine hydration lines, and can also provide long-lasting make-up support for a gloriously vibrant look

Available from **Silhouette Dermalift**, Herbal Mask is specifically designed for sensitive skin. The astringent properties in this soothing mask are ideal for reducing redness and irritation, and ingredients include Orris Root, which comforts the skin as the treatment purifies pores, stabilises PH and decreases the excessive production of oil and sebum to promote a refreshed complexion

Also on offer are Silhouette's professional skincare Herbal Ampoules, containing highly concentrated biological ingredients to penetrate, rescue and calm sensitive skin whilst tightening pores.

Susan Molyneux's firming ampoules contain collagen and polysaccharides to help reduce fine lines and restore a youthful appearance to the skin. The product also contains lavender essential oil to aid cellular renewal, and active ingredients of soluble collagen; polysaccharides; de-ionised water. This intensive treatment aids cellular renewal and helps the skin to regain elasticity and moisture. It removes signs of fatigue resulting in more radiant looking skin. Susan Molyneux Ampoules are suitable for dry, sensitive, or mature skin.

Making the most of it

Clients with sensitive skin need to be particularly careful with their choice of make-up, as certain ingredients (or the combination of certain ingredients) may lead to unsightly reactions. They may wish to avoid make-up that contains chemicals and preservatives. There are four main parabens in use at the moment in the cosmetic industry: methyl, ethyl, propyl and butylparabens. Many products will contain two or more of these chemicals as part of a preservative system. Thankfully however, preservatives in cosmetics are on the label in the EU, which makes these chemicals easier to avoid.

Jane Iredale base make-up, Amazing Base and PurePressed Base, is derived from natural micronised minerals, and offers flawless 'barely there' coverage whilst promoting healthy skin.

PureLash Lengthening Mascara eliminates common chemical sensitisers and adds natural conditioning ingredients. The mascara contains no lacquers, shellac or petroleum-based products and is extremely popular with clients who have been unable to wear mascara for years because of allergic reactions.

Lip and Eye Pencils are made with conditioning oils and waxes and coloured only with Jane's favoured protective natural pigments and without artificial preservatives, to minimize the risk of allergic reactions. Formulated without the petroleum or coal tar-derived FD&C dyes found in most make-up, the pencils are perfectly interchangeable and can be used anywhere on the face without irritation.

All Jane Iredale cosmetics exclude sensitising ingredients, and many go further still with the addition of soothing ingredients.

PurePressed Blushers are free from chemical dyes and preservatives and non-comedogenic, based instead on natural iron oxide colouring with anti-inflammatory titanium dioxide and zinc oxide to give an extra smooth finish and sun protection.

Antioxidant pinebark extract, a natural anti-inflammatory, soothes redness and puffiness. Chamomile, calendula, lavender water and willow bark extract give anti-inflammatory and soothing properties to Jane's liquid foundation, Liquid Minerals.

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