

Sleeping Beauty

Being city people, we can all sleep amidst bustling street traffic noises, so an extra humming of a humidifier wouldn't make much difference, especially if you want to have better skin.

Text **Cheryl Zhang**

As much as we detest the sticky blanket of humidity that washes over us the moment we step out of our houses, it doesn't do us much good to retreat back into the cool comfort of air conditioned places either. And see that most of us, whether we're working adults or students, spend majority of our time in air conditioned places, we decided to speak with Dr Ketki Vinayachandra, naturopathic physician at Natural Therapies and Ms. Lilian Teo, an aesthetician at Alda Spa whose treatments use Dr Hauschka products about the pros and cons of ... well, air con.

Choices: What happens to our skin when we're sleeping in air-conditioned rooms?

Dr Ketki: Cold air has less moisture, and it dries your skin since water evaporates faster in dry atmospheres.

Ms Teo: While you sleep your skin is actually hard at work regenerating itself, balancing oil production and expelling impurities. Dehydration will lead to lack of moisture in the skin, resulting in these processes becoming less effective. Dry, air-conditioned or centrally-heated interiors dehydrate the skin, leaving the epidermis dry, flaky and vulnerable. This dehydration damages the skin's barrier function and promotes increased evaporation of dermal moisture.

Choices: How do you maintain moisture levels in your body especially if you are frequently exposed to air conditioning?

Dr Ketki: Apply moisturiser on the skin to protect the skin from losing water, add a humidifier to the room so the air is humidified, and avoid harsh soaps, frequent washing and very warm water

Choices: Will it help the skin retain its moisture if we do not sleep in air-conditioned rooms?

Ms Teo: Yes. Surprisingly, although we complain about it often, our tropical humid weather is one of the reasons why Asians tend to age a lot slower than Caucasians, who usually hail from dry, temperate weather. Our skin doesn't lose as much moisture as theirs. Hence, if you don't sleep in air-conditioned rooms, your skin will thus not lose as much moisture.

Choices: How do you remedy the dryness brought on by air conditioning?

Ms Teo: Regular application of night creams interferes with the skin's long term ability to care for itself. Covering the skin with moisturiser 24 hours a day sends a signal to sebaceous glands to cut down on moisture production, resulting in even drier skin that becomes dependent on moisturising products just to appear "normal."

If you really need to put something on your skin before you go to sleep, ensure that it assists in restoring the skin to its natural balance and does not attempt to replace or interfere with the skin's own purifying and rejuvenating agent's mechanisms. Try using Dr. Hauschka Rhythmic Night Conditioner, a water-based formula infused with rose essential oil and dynamic plant extracts that supports renewal and balances oil production. Use it for 28 days, mirroring and supporting the skin's natural cycle of regeneration to encourage a return to a healthy, balanced complexion.

Choices: How can we take better care of our skin, without the use of cosmetic aid?

Ms Teo: Soaps with strong detergents remove all natural body oils from your skin. These oils are essential to help keep your skin moisturised, and without them your skin is more vulnerable to drying out once you step out of the shower or tub.

Long, hot showers or baths are not a good idea. Not only will soap remove natural oils from your skin, but so can water. Your skin does have a natural ability to be water-resistant, but after time, too much water on the body will wash away all the oils and leave your skin more prone to dryness. Use lukewarm water as hot water will only speed up the process, and do what you can to keep time in the water short.

Choices: How do we (artificially) take care of the dryness on the rest of our body then?

Ms Teo: Moisturisers are used to prevent loss of water from the skin through evaporation, as well as holding on to water. Moisturisers can also make your skin more supple and promote smoothness. Use moisturisers with ingredients such as emollients and humectants can help do wonders for your skin.

Dr Hauschka Quince Body Moisturiser is a light and non-greasy lotion contains Quince seed extract, which helps regulate the moisture content of the skin, so it won't dry out. It preserves and improves the elasticity of the skin and leaves it feeling soft and refreshed. We also recommend the Dr Hauschka Rose Body Moisturiser is also very nurturing in airconditioned environments especially so for dry, sensitive and mature skin. Sweet almond and jojoba oils combine with quince seed extract to hydrate. Rose wax protects and seals in moisture.

