

The Fairest of them all

Asian women seem to have an obsession with being as fair as can be. Setting aside the fact that we might just turn translucent one day, fairness has its benefits, though it may not be easy to achieve.

By Cheryl Zhang



We may not be talking to mirrors on the wall yet, but we're definitely on our quest to be the fairest of them all. According to skincare giant L'Oréal, most Asian women want to have luminous, transparent and radiant skin with even skin tone without brown spots. In fact, a qualitative study conducted by the L'Oréal Group in 2004 in China, Taiwan and Thailand also shows that clear, even and bright skin gives a majority of Asian women more self-confidence as they feel more attractive.

Though we may be fairer than the Middle Eastern citizens, Asian skin isn't the fairest of them all. Our skin types belong mainly to that of Phototypes III and IV, which contains darker melanin (also known as eumelanin) in higher quantities, as compared to Caucasian skin. Asian skin is more prone to hyperpigmentation because of melanosomes (cells charged with melanin). These cells are bigger but also more resistant to degradation.

BEGONE, DARNED SPOT

Just a little biological background here: Melanin is a pigment that darkens complexion. When the skin is exposed to UV rays, active oxygen and cytokine are released, stimulating melanocytes to produce melanin. A large amount of melanin is produced in melanosomes and transferred to nearby epidermal cells. Melanosomes gradually move up through the epidermis and are excreted. As long as melanin is produced in a regular and

constant manner, skin pigmentation is even.

However, with ageing and prolonged exposure to the sun, this system becomes disrupted. Melanin is produced in excess, which gets loaded into skin cells and eventually rises towards the skin's surface in the form of brown spots.

Extensive research by SK-II has also shown that age spots are not only caused by excess melanin production but are also related to more fundamental abnormalities in the skin's structure – the loosening of the basement membrane. When skin loses its firmness with age and because of a variety of environmental factors, melanin sinks deeper into the skin, causing the development of darker-looking spots. In particular, the basement membrane, which is a thin film consisting of collagen that exists between the dermis and epidermis, loses its elasticity due to UV rays and aging. As it weakens and its functions decline, it loosens and excess melanin produced by the skin sinks into the dermal layers, thus causing dark spots.

This unfortunate phenomenon can start as early as the age of 20, and can be accelerated especially for those living in a tropical climate country such as Singapore. Citizens of such countries have a higher tendency to spend more time outdoors under the sweating sun. Brown spots will begin to appear on the temples and cheekbones. If nothing is done to correct them, they will grow in size and darken in colour over time.

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- 1-Cinelle SnowWhite Mask 50ml - \$39.95
- 2-Dermologica Daily Microfoliant 75g - \$99.80
- 3-Lancôme Spot Essie - \$15
- 4-Lancôme Ultimate whitening purifying foam - \$61
- 5-Lancôme ultimate whitening light blooming mask - \$128
- 6-Lancôme ultimate whitening light blooming mask - \$133
- 7-L'Oréal Paris Dermo-Expertise White Perfect Day Cream SPF 15 - \$23.90
- 8-L'Oréal Paris Dermo-Expertise White Perfect Radiance Boosting Double Essence - \$34.90
- 9-L'Oréal Paris Dermo-Expertise White Perfect Zooming Spot Corrector - \$28.90
- 10-Maxell New York White Stay Mousse SPF 24/PA - \$24.90
- 11-NIVEA body Whitening Treatment Cream 100ml - \$6.60
- 12-NIVEA Sun Whitening Sun Lotion SPF 50 125ml - \$24.35
- 13-Phyto Organics Floramine Purifying Mask - \$59 per 75ml
- 14-Phyto Organics Multi Whitening Earth Mineral Mask - \$77 per 130g
- 15-Shiseido Body Creator Aromatic Energizing Spray - \$64
- 16-Shiseido White Lucent Mask - \$100
- 17-Shiseido White Lucent Intensive Massage Cream - \$85
- 18-SK-II Whitening Source Dermofoliant 30ml - \$150
- 19-VICHI'S Bi-White Advanced Deep Cleansing Gel 100ml - \$48
- 20-VICHI'S Bi-White Advanced Whitening Toner 200ml - \$48
- 21-VICHI Bi-White Eyes - \$72
- 22-VICHI'S Bi-White Advanced Intensive Whitening Corrective Care 30ml - \$72
- 23-VICHI'S Bi-White Advanced Protective Whitening Hydrating Fluid SPF20 50ml - \$58
- 24-VICHI'S Bi-White Advanced Whitening Hydrating Mask (box of 6) - \$69
- 25-Shu Uemura WEDX Intensive Brightening Mask (8 tabs) - \$121
- 26-Skinfood Apple Whitening Emulsion (Special Whitening Line) - \$30.60

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It's Witch-ing Season

'Tis the time of the year for Halloween, and witches are rumoured to roam the world. But for us, Witch doesn't just bring to mind gnarled fingers and broomsticks; we particularly like Witch Skincare for their products.

By Cheryl Zhang

You don't have to go to extremes for clear skin. Forget the hassles of complicated methods once and for all! Witch keeps daily skincare routines fuss-free and give you all the cleansing you need with a little extra zing.

Widely recognised for its natural anti-inflammatory and astringent properties, witch hazel, also found in Witch skincare products, thoroughly cleanses the skin and washes away excess oil and impurities that may lead to spots and blemishes. Witch skincare products are uniquely formulated with pure, cooling



extract of natural witch hazel to effectively maintain healthy looking skin by cleansing deep down and helping to naturally rebalance and refresh your skin, leaving skin tingly clean and revitalised.

Witch skincare products are dermatologically proven to be suitable for all skin types and are perfect for Singaporeans given the sunny and humid local weather.

GLOW WITH WITCH RADIANCE SERUM 50ML - \$19.90

One of their two new products is the Witch Radiance Serum, a light and moisturiser oil-free to keep your skin glowing and radiant. Ideal for use under make-up or on its own, this product is a real beauty essential. It gets absorbed into the skin quickly and helps keep your skin hydrated and moisturised. It also provides an instant boost to the skin anytime you require. The gel-type formulation increases skin absorption rate, smoothes away fine lines, contains natural light-reflecting radiance particles for a naturally glowing skin and isn't oily.

Consumers also reported positive results such as "really soft skin", "naturally refreshed", "glowing skin" and "improved skin".



PLUMP UP WITH WITCH HYDRATION GEL 75ML - \$22.90

Witch Hydrating Gel is oil free, and is ideal as an everyday moisturiser. It is loaded with moisture and can keep your skin hydrated for up to 24hrs without shine. It's perfect for people with busy lifestyles who haven't got the time to reapply during the day. This product also contains SPF10, which has been specifically designed for oily/combination skin and can help protect against UV rays.

Consumer testing results revealed "softer, smoother and soothed skin", "naturally refreshed skin" and also "all-day hydration".

Witch products are available at Cold Storage, Giant, Guardian, Watsons, and other leading departmental stores, prices range from \$3.70 to \$22.90. For more information on the full Witch product range, visit Witch Skincare website at <http://www.witchskincare.com>.

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Reading the fine print

Almost every product contains specific ingredients to whiten your skin. Here's a breakdown of what exactly they do.

Derm Complex
contains DMT Blocker, long-acting Vitamin C, vitamin B3, yeast amino peptide which prevents skin-darkening melanin from being produced, transferred and remaining in the skin.

Ellagic Acid:
usually found in strawberries, L'Oréal Paris has harnessed this anti-oxidation property which reduces melanin apparition so existing dark spots are lightened, and also prevents melanin blackening as it is an anti-oxidant that fights against free radicals, so brown spots don't appear!

Extra-Active Vitamin C:
Stimulates the renewal of skin cells and enables the evacuation of dead melanin-filled skin cells to take place more rapidly. Eventually, new skin cells rise to the skin's surface with less melanin.

Flava-G Hesperetin Complex:
Activates your skin's anti-oxidant enzyme to slow down the relay of melanin.

Liquorice Extract:
Contains whitening properties that inhibit the production of melanin.

Mexoryl UV filters:
L'Oréal's patented filters reduce melanocytes production to prevent further darkening of the skin.

Melano-Block:
The powerful whitening ingredient regulates the production of melanin so brown spots are reduced. This L'Oréal-exclusive formula also contains Vitamin C to slow down the rate of skin darkening.

Procystein:
The fruit of ten years of advance research, Vichy's patented molecule acts in the heart of melanocytes to inhibit melanin synthesis and reduces its production by up to 24%.

Super High Stabilizing Vitamin C:
Speeds up the elimination of existing melanin and inhibits generation of melanin pigment

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- 27-Skinfood Apple Whitening Essence (Special Whitening Line) - \$32.20
- 28-Skinfood Apple Whitening Cream (Special Whitening Line) - \$32.20
- 29-Skinfood Apple Whitening Toner (Special Whitening Line) - \$30.60
- 30-2a CLEANSING MASK - \$13.50
- 31-2a TRUE WHITE MICROKAGE CREAM - \$13.50
- 32-2a TRUE WHITE ESSENCE MASK - \$30.50
- 33-2a TRUE WHITE ESSENCE - \$23.50
- 34-2a TRUE WHITE DAY PROTECTOR - \$13.50
- 35-2a TRUE WHITE NIGHT CREAM - \$23.50
- 36-2a TRUE WHITE EMULSION - \$18.90
- 37-2a TRUE WHITE LOTION - \$18.50

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