

Look, feel, you

Transitioning into menopause can be a difficult time of ups and downs, with unexpected symptoms. Our reproductive system and hormones go through major changes—we all know this. But those changes can affect our skin, hair and nail health, too. Here's how to get through it.

PRODUCER JESSICA DOSTIE



hair

Thinning of the hair or hair loss is extremely common during perimenopause. Losing your hair can be alarming, especially when it falls out in handfuls and doesn't grow back as quickly as it used to. To top it off, your hair may also lose shine and strength—becoming more brittle and difficult to comb and style. These are the consequences of hormonal imbalances and a lack of nutrients and oxygenation at the roots—a perfect cocktail for a bad hair day!



treatment

If you're concerned about perimenopausal hair loss or thinning, use a silicone-free shampoo and conditioner, as silicone can clog the hair follicles, says hair stylist and colourist Marie-France Goyette, the owner of Montreal-based Hair Shop salon. You should aim to reactivate blood circulation, as well as stimulate and nourish weakened follicles, she says. And don't skimp on scalp treatments, which can help mitigate the loss of density. "During this period, it's a good idea to invest a little less in colouring and more in care," she adds, noting that bleaches, in particular, should be avoided if possible, since they will damage already delicate hair.

Care for your hair by regularly using moisturizing treatments that smooth the cuticles to enhance shine. Other great tips for limiting breakage: Use a boar bristle brush and reduce the use of hot tools to the bare minimum (plus, always apply a heat protectant first).

Our product picks

1. A scalp treatment that combats hair loss thanks to strengthening Aminexil.

VICHY Dercos Fortifying Treatment 5, \$74.95, vichy.ca.

2. A treatment enriched with hyaluronic acid to rehydrate and plump up thin, tired hair.

RENÉ FURTERER Tonucia Replumping Conditioning Mask, \$54, matandmax.com.

3. A silicone- and paraben-free duo designed to accentuate shine and facilitate styling.

AUTHENTIC BEAUTY CONCEPT Glow Cleanser and Conditioner for Coloured Hair, \$35 each, authenticbeautyconcept.ca.

4. A leave-in treatment to revive hair's shine.

PHYTO PARIS Phytocolor Shine Activating Care, \$30, phyto-canada.ca.



PHOTOGRAPHY: ISTOCKPHOTO/E



Perimenopause comes with its share of symptoms, usually for women between the ages of 45 and 55 years old. "It's a real roller coaster ride," explains Nathalie Pelletier, director, research & development for scientific affairs for the Quebec brands Functionalab and Jouviance. "Some women find going through perimenopause more difficult than menopause itself." Our hormones, specifically estrogen and progesterone, will fluctuate for anywhere from two to eight years.

While we're well aware of the effects of menopause on the reproductive system, the impact of these hormonal changes on our physical appearance is very real, too, although it's not as frequently discussed. "With age, not only does hormone secretion decrease, but the quality of your hormones decreases as well," says Pelletier. And although each part of the body reacts differently to these upheavals, they have a definite effect on the quality of the skin, hair and nails.



SKIN

"When it comes to perimenopause, there's a whole range of things going on in our body due to hormonal fluctuations," says Rachelle Séguin, chemist and co-founder of the cosmetics brand Omy. First, the texture of the skin is bound to change: "Concerns are usually with dryness, thinning, dehydration, lack of radiance and loss of firmness," she says. The skin is also more fragile, sometimes presenting more redness and itching. And it all happens due to a deficiency in estrogen that causes a slowdown in the skin's production of hyaluronic acid, collagen and elastin.

Some women may complain of oily skin and large pores in addition to seeing blemishes and even suffering from acne. These skin conditions can be attributed to the imbalance and decline of our hormones. Also, an excess of androgens may result in the appearance of hair on the chin and upper lip in some women.

treatment

Whether you suffer from dry skin or, conversely, if your skin has suddenly gone from normal to oily, a targeted skincare regimen will make all the difference. "When it comes to mature skin, comfort is paramount," says Pelletier. If you find that your usual products no longer suit you, swap them out for a range that targets your new concerns. No matter what you experience, the essentials of your beauty kit should include a gentle exfoliant—used to stimulate cell renewal, unclog pores and reduce blemishes—and a sunblock. "I can't stress enough how important

it is to protect the skin from the sun," adds Pelletier. This is especially true if you use a retinol-based anti-aging product, which works wonders for evening out skin tone, but has a notorious photosensitizing effect.

If you have very dry skin on your body and face, avoid taking hot baths. To reduce the pulling effect and itchiness of dry skin, moisturize immediately after showering while the dermis is still a little damp, and use products rich in essential fatty acids (omega 3, 6 and 9), hyaluronic acid or nourishing botanical extracts such as shea butter.

Our product picks

FOR THE FACE

1. Gentle and rich in lipids, this makeup remover preserves the pH of weakened skin.

OMY LABORATOIRES Nutri-B5 Milk Cleanser, \$30, omycosmetics.com.

2. These capsules, chock-full of antioxidants, help to illuminate the skin and reduce dark spots.

NEUTROGENA Rapid Tone Repair Vitamin C Serum Capsules, \$37, shoppersdrugmart.ca.

3. An essential mineral sunblock with a non-greasy formula that's quickly absorbed into the skin.

OLAY Regenerist SPF Hydrating Moisturizer, SPF 30, \$40, walmart.ca.

4. The skin of the lips needs a moisturizer for the best pucker power.

FRESH Sugar Lychee Hydrating Lip Balm, \$24, nordstrom.ca.

5. For acne-prone skin, this mattifying concentrate targets blemishes and tightens pores.

AVÈNE Cleanance Comedomed Anti-Blemish Concentrate, \$26, well.ca.

6. Purifying without being over-drying, this treatment decongests pores in minutes.

GLOW RECIPE Watermelon Glow Hyaluronic Clay Pore-Tight Facial Mask, \$53, sephora.ca.

FOR THE BODY

7. This cream offers ceramides to strengthen the skin barrier, and pramoxine hydrochloride to help relieve itching and irritation.

CERAVE Itch Relief Moisturizing Cream, \$28, walmart.ca.

8. Fight dry skin in the shower with this luxe cleansing gel.

DUCRAY Dextane Ultra-Rich Cleansing Gel, \$24, well.ca.



nails

During perimenopause, both fingernails and toenails can weaken and become streaky. "These streaks, caused by reduced keratin production, could be compared to wrinkles on the nails," says Pelletier, adding that this is one of the visible effects of aging. Once again, the hormonal drop is the culprit. In the same way as the skin, the nails will tend to become more dehydrated and, as a result, also more brittle.

treatment

With age, it's inevitable that nails become brittle and can break easily. Regularly applying hand cream and strengthening treatments helps, but we should also be protecting hands and feet from the drying effect of water, for example by wearing gloves when washing dishes.

Our product picks

1. A treatment to help repair damaged and weakened nails.

CND Rescue Rx Daily Keratin Treatment, \$20, nailpolishcanada.com.

2. A cocktail of biotin, iron, zinc and vitamin C can help to strengthen the hair and nails, while also protecting the skin from free radicals.

FUNCTIONALAB Hair and Nails Beauty Dose, \$45, functionalab.com.

3. This non-greasy cream is enriched with grape polyphenols and nourishing shea butter.

CAUDALIE Hand and Nail Cream, \$22, caudalie.ca.



Go the extra mile.

ELECTROLYSIS

To remove hair that has appeared on the chin or the upper lip, permanent hair removal is a convenient choice. For a few hairs here and there, electrolysis can be an effective solution. You can expect about 10 short sessions to do the trick.

PEELS

To illuminate and even out the complexion, there's nothing like a peel. This treatment, which consists of a chemical exfoliation, with glycolic acid, for example, helps to stimulate the production of collagen. Peels are also effective in fighting acne and tightening large pores.

MOISTURIZING TREATMENTS

Creams are great, but to deeply hydrate, you might opt for a spa treatment. Marilyne Gagné, president of Dermapure, suggests the new Bela MD skin health platform. "In addition to hydrating the skin, it tones and plumps it up for weeks." By exfoliating the surface layer of the skin using a diamond point, the device promotes the penetration and absorption of a serum selected for your skin type (in addition to dehydration, the treatment also targets acne, large pores and wrinkles). There are several options for mature, dehydrated or problem skin.

getting even

We're all susceptible to increased skin pigmentation—especially on the face, décolletage, forearms and hands—and it usually shows up as we age. But no worries! We've got expert tips and product recommendations to help you target those unwanted spots.

TEXT MAROUCHE FRANJULIEN

Pigment spots (not to be mistaken for freckles, which are genetic) are also called solar lentigines, age spots or hyperpigmentation, and are caused by an overproduction of melanin. They appear over the years in places where the skin has been exposed to UV rays and blue light, causing melanin to become clumped or produced in high concentrations. The good news? It's possible to prevent hyperpigmentation and reduce the appearance of spots that are already there.

INGREDIENT INVESTMENT

"Because skin cells regenerate by themselves, it's possible to encourage the production of new, healthy cells and stimulate cell renewal

to remove excess melanin," says McKenzie Bolt, director of global education for beauty brand Biossance. How? By using products that contain vitamin C. Present in serums in concentrated quantities, this natural antioxidant is known for its skin brightening benefits. Though using a product with vitamin C can take up to three or four months to show results, you may notice an improvement after the first month. Use the treatment on a regular basis, meaning at least three times a week, recommends Bolt. It's important to note that vitamin C is a fragile active ingredient that requires proper storage in order to retain its efficacy, so be sure to faithfully follow the storage directions on the product's label.

PROTECTION PROMISE

Since the sun's rays are one of the main causes of hyperpigmentation, it's imperative to protect yourself against UV rays. "Just as we work to correct or even out our complexion, we must protect our skin: If we don't put on sunblock, it's like taking one step forward and 10 steps back," says Bolt. Don't skimp on the sunblock—use an SPF 50 on your face and an SPF 30 on the rest of the body. Other things you can do to protect your skin include wearing protective clothing and a hat, using products that protect skin from the blue light of screens, and applying creams and treatments that contain retinols, glycolic acid or any other exfoliant in the evening only, since exfoliation can make your skin more sensitive to the sun.



PHOTOGRAPHY: BRUNO PETROZZA/C. ISTOCKPHOTO/E

Our product picks

1

Want to reduce the appearance of pigment spots *and* fine lines? This toner kills two birds with one stone: Rich in glycolic and lactic acids (the famous AHAs, which exfoliate the skin by encouraging cell renewal), it also contains witch hazel and sandalwood extracts, licorice root and chamomile. Use it in the evening before applying your serum to take full advantage of its benefits.

OLEHENRIKSEN Glow2OH Dark Spot Toner, \$38, sephora.ca.

2

Thanks to Photo Reverse technology developed by Esthederm, this treatment visibly decreases the appearance of hyperpigmentation, while the tinted formula camouflages it.

ESTHEDERM Sun Expert Tinted Brightening Care Visible Dark Spots, \$59, esthederm.ca.

3

Containing 10 percent vitamin C, this serum visibly reduces existing dark spots, while stimulating collagen production. It also contains squalane, and white shiitake mushroom and licorice root extracts, which help to prevent the onset of future hyperpigmentation.

BIOSSANCE Squalane + Vitamin C Dark Spot Serum, \$78, biossance.com.

4

This sphere-shaped jar holds a night cream that

can also be used as a face mask. The cream's formula reduces hyperpigmentation and brightens the complexion thanks to the extract of camu-camu, a small fruit rich in vitamin C and antioxidants. Other ingredients, including exfoliating lime caviar extract and moisturizing moringa butter, make this treatment a must-have for your skin-care routine.

JOUVIANCE Dream Cream Night Repair Cream-in-Mask, \$65, jouviance.com.

5

A high concentration of vitamin E, as well as the addition of ferulic and vitamin C to this cocktail of powerful antioxidants reduces the appearance of dark spots and fine lines, and also firms the skin. Extracts of pumpkin ferment and pomegranate work to remove dead skin cells, combat dullness and reduce pore size—and it shows!

DRUNK ELEPHANT C-Firma Day Serum, \$105, sephora.ca.

6

This single-use fabric mask—sold in packs of six—is made of flexible material to fit all face shapes. The goal? To saturate the skin with active ingredients that penetrate deeply and target dark spots. Ten minutes, et voilà, a soft, smooth, more even-toned complexion!

SHISEIDO Power Brightening Mask, \$85/pack of 6, shiseido.ca.

