

Skin care for teenagers

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Young people are literally apprentices when it comes to their skincare. What is important and what should they know? We have put together some practical advice here.

The German Social Code of 1990 defines an adolescent in Book VIII § 7 as someone who is 14 but not yet 18 years old. In terms of skin care, this refers to the period between the onset of puberty and the completion of physical body development. In short, we are talking about teenagers.

What characterises this development phase?

- The hormonal balance changes.
- Body odour is perceived differently.
- Hygiene awareness is changing.
- The hair on the head and body changes.
- Personal appearance is gaining in importance.
- Eating habits are changing.
- Specific skin symptoms occur.

What do these points have to do with skin and its care? A lot, because young people are influenced by their own perceptions and ideas, advice from friends and family, the press and advertising. And they are in a phase in which their background knowledge of skin care is still poorly developed and decision-making is difficult. They are going through a period of experimentation of uncertain duration. Advice from a competent cosmetics institute would be helpful, but very few young people find their way there. In problematic cases, the most they will do is consult their family doctor. Furthermore, the subject matter is not entirely simple.

Skin cleansing

Skin cleansing is a top priority. Feeling clean and appearing clean are becoming more important every day, as sweat and sebaceous glands are heading for their peak form.

You quickly get used to the full-body shampoo. However, the new habit is not without its pitfalls, because the more often the whole-body shampoo is used and the more degreasing is produced, the more a counter-reaction is triggered, in that the regenerative greasing of the skin is accelerated. A warm shower in the morning without a cleansing aid is completely sufficient, saves money and has the advantage that you don't have to get used to it later when

the glands are less active and the skin is more prone to dryness. Well, the pleasantly smoothing body lotion is used anyway. But it doesn't give the skin exactly what it loses. Even with the best ingredients, the skin's own protection is always ahead.

Another factor is the skin microbiome, which suffers from the high-frequency application of pore-deep surfactants. Pathogenic germs are given the chance to spread on the initially unprotected skin. Problems such as fungal infections on the feet (filamentous fungi), in intimate areas (vaginal mycoses), under the hair (dandruff) and even on the face (pityriasis versicolor, caused by *Malassezia* yeast fungi) generally occur more frequently in this context. And one more thing: subliminal atopy of the skin often only becomes apparent as a result of cleaning behaviour, with high water hardness being a decisive factor.

Intimate sprays and sanitary wipes are at best something for emergencies. Their compositions are suboptimal, to say the least.

Hair

One of the achievements of modern culture is shaving or depilation under the armpits and removing pubic hair. There is no doubt that it looks very attractive at first glance, although not everyone is allowed to do this. However, sweat stains on blouses and shirts show all the more the disadvantages that even a deodorant can't solve. This is because underarm hair has two functions: to increase the surface area for sweat evaporation and to minimise skin-to-skin friction. Similarly, textiles worn tightly in the intimate zone rub against sensitive skin. Irritation is to be expected.

Conversely, boys like to groom their first fuzz, which should become a decent beard as quickly as possible. The dry shaver takes care of styling the beard and the area around it, while razor blades have gone out of fashion. This is gentle on the skin, were it not for the high-percentage aftershave with its precious ingredients that promise coolness and freshness. It is worth learning to understand the INCI in order to avoid drying out and irritating

the skin in daily use. Here's a tip: you can do it without, just with water.

Girls continue to wear their hair long and boys wear it short again. When it comes to hair care, it should be noted that hair gels that are unconsciously applied to the forehead can lead to skin blemishes – especially in adolescents who are prone to acne.

Acne

Acne is an issue that affects both sexes. The causes are varied. It is important that skin care does not contribute to obstructing the sebaceous gland ducts. Skin care creams and decorative products, if used, should be less occlusive so as not to create a land of milk and honey for anaerobes. Comedogenic ingredients such as stearates in high concentrations are counterproductive.

Creams should be avoided altogether for oily skin. Linoleic acid-rich liposomal lotions based on phosphatidylcholine are helpful. Niacinamide and azelaic acid have a synergistic effect. It is important to apply products with essential fatty acids only in the evening and to ensure that the skin is not exposed to sunlight after application.

Manipulation of the comedones should be avoided. If necessary, disinfect locally with aqueous antiseptics. Further measures should be left to a well-trained beautician.

Skin protection

Otherwise, if your skin is unproblematic, it is advisable to apply a cream in winter in dry, cold weather, especially during winter sports, and to supplement it with a lip balm rich in lip balm.

The situation is different in the manufacturing industry, where special skin protection products are often still used. Here it is now clear that regenerative care during leisure time is more important than preparative skin protection at the workplace.

If intense sunlight is to be expected during the day, sun protection creams with a protection factor adapted to the season and the local UV index are suitable. All-day sun protection is not advisable if you spend most of your time indoors.

Allergies

In the event of allergic reactions, specialists should be consulted who can identify the causes based on the composition of the care products and their combinations.

In addition to preservatives and fragrances in the products, there is still the problem of nickel-containing costume jewellery. Nickel is oxida-

tively dissolved in the presence of complexing components such as polyethylene glycols (PEG) and can trigger local allergies if you are predisposed to this. The décolleté is usually affected.

Irritations following the application of hypertonic preparations on sensitive and barrier-damaged skin are often mistaken for allergies. The associated redness is harmless and disappears after a short time. The cause is low-molecular, water-soluble components such as urea and mineral salts.

Side effects of medication may also need to be considered.

Anti-aging

Girls now start with fruit acid peels and microdermabrasion at an early stage. Experience has shown that they are not necessary for young skin. The psyche, i.e. the search for the first wrinkles, is the decisive driving force that often leads to early skin damage.

One last tip: sport and exercise are free and have a greater effect on the skin than you might think. Apart from the fact that it also neutralises excess calories that promote orange peel skin. A balanced diet is another important factor.

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