

Skin patients and beauty treatments

By Jennifer De Freitas

Our face is the first thing people see—along with our hair—and caring for these features are an important part of our beauty regime, regardless of any skin condition we might have. Beauty salon services and treatments can make all the difference between radiance and a dull look. However, the thought of visiting a beauty salon can be daunting or embarrassing; the world has a beauty paradigm that touts certain qualities that, for many of us, seem unattainable.

Skin patients should not shy away from beauty salons or spas. We, too, can enjoy some pampering and personal care. What's important is to make sure you are dealing with experts who can be responsive to dermatological conditions. As a person with vitiligo, there are a few things I consider—and so should you—before determining if an aesthetician, hair stylist, manicurist, massage therapist or make-up artist is right for me and my skin condition.

The right beauty practitioner

Budget: Prices for skin and hair-care services can vary widely, depending on the type of facility you visit. Remember, more expensive doesn't necessarily mean better. However, in some cases the cost reflects the quality and type of products being used.

Cleanliness: A clean, uncluttered workspace is a sign of a well-run business. Pay close attention to a facility's sanitary procedures and conditions—you will be doing your skin a favour.

Comfort: Keep in mind that comfort goes both ways. Just as we expect to feel comfortable when receiving a service, so beauty professionals expect to feel comfortable when providing a service. If the two of you do not feel at ease with each other, then look for another specialist.

Communication: Be upfront about your skin condition and any allergies or sensitivities you have—by keeping hush-hush, you will only be doing yourself a disservice. An informed practitioner can recommend the most suitable products and treatments.

Education and experience: Find out if your specialist has had any formal training on skin conditions that would be helpful in providing services to you. More importantly, ask

about past treatments performed on people with skin conditions and the outcomes. You can even ask for photos of treatments performed on previous clients. Also ask how regularly they update their skills. Finally, if you are dealing with a therapist within a regulated profession, make sure his or her licence is valid.

Types of treatments

Salon and spa menus tempt us with wonderfully scented, luscious offerings. Scrubs, herbal wraps, hot or cold stone massages, permanents and hair straightening, waxing and threading come to mind. Ask questions before you book and test the products and methods of application on an inconspicuous part of your skin before your visit. By taking these simple precautions, you can avoid subjecting yourself and your skin to unnecessary grief.

Consult with a dermatologist

Make sure you ask your dermatologist which ingredients and products are safe for your skin condition, and which should be avoided. Educate yourself before booking. Share your tips with other Canadian skin patients at skenergy.ca. **CS**

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