

FOCUS ON: BALMS

With Gillian O'Meagher

Balms have been used for centuries to soothe the skin, and can also offer aromatherapy benefits when infused with fragrant essential oils.

According to Tinderbox co-owner and founder Cassandra Menard, balms and salves were designed to stick around on the skin for longer than creams, which absorb more quickly.

"They're an effective way to encapsulate the beneficial extracts of herbs and plants," said Ms Menard, who recommended storing balms in a cool, dry place.

Aesop Asia Pacific retail training manager Hayden Davies said a good quality body balm should offer rich hydration without leaving any sticky residue or heavy skin feel.

"Regular use of a hydration product is an investment in the long-term health of the skin, a concept well understood by people when referring to the face, but should also be extended to the rest of the body," Mr Davies said.

He advised applying body balm shortly after a bath or shower, when skin was still damp and warm.

"The skin is most receptive to hydration at this time. Remember that dry skin on the body should be remedied not only with a good balm or body oil, but with a mild body cleanser with no fragrance or colour."

Dusk buyer Laura Farnsworth said the company's new aromatherapy balms were perfect for enhancing wellbeing for busy people.

"Our aromatherapy balms are quick and easy to apply. Simply rub the balm on to your wrist or temples to experience the benefits," she said.



hot!



L'Occitane Aromachologie Relaxing Hand Balm, \$21.95, from L'Occitane in Subiaco and Carillon City.



Aesop Violet Leaf Hair Balm, \$33, stockists: 1300 721 754.

Dusk Sleep Assist Lavender, Marjoram and Ylang Ylang Aromatherapy Balm, \$15, from dusk stores.



Trilogy Everything Balm, \$18/45ml, \$30/95ml, from Myer, Priceline, selected pharmacies and health food stores.

Essential Stuff Pomegranate and Peppermint Foot Balm, \$25, stockists: 9409 4992.



Burt's Bees Mama Bee Belly Balm, \$29.95, stockists: 1300 855 478.



Tinderbox Lavender Balm, \$9.50, stockists list at www.cheekyherbs.com.

WIN!

Mind&Body and dusk are offering three lucky readers a dusk Aromatherapy Collection Prize Pack, including Peppermint Lip Balm, Concentration Grapefruit, Petitgrain and Spearmint Aromatherapy Balm and Calming Orange, Lavender and Patchouli Essential Oil Blend, to a total value of \$38. To be in the draw to win, write your name and address on the back of an envelope and post it to: Mind&Body dusk competition, GPO Box 2908, Perth 6800. Entries drawn at random on Monday. Winners notified by mail. Employees of *The West Australian* and their immediate family ineligible to enter. Entrants' details will be used for marketing. See WAN privacy policy at thewest.com.au.

HEALTH + WELLNESS

Improve your health with naturopath Michael Treloar ND

I have an embarrassing problem; a very itchy bottom. I've seen my doctor about this several times, but she's essentially told me there isn't much I can do about it as it is probably a fungal issue and very difficult to treat. I use an anti-fungal cream every day and often resort to a steroid-based cream, but even my doctor has warned me against this option as it just wears down the skin. Name withheld

Your doctor is correct, watch your use of steroid cream as one of the side effects of steroids is thinning the skin, and once the integrity of the skin is lost it cannot be restored. My first advice is get a swab taken so you know what the problem is, as haemorrhoids can also feel itchy.

If it is haemorrhoids, the herb horse chestnut is very good at treating this condition. If it is a fungus there is no good in topical treatments only, we must look at what's going on within your body too. Start with restoring the bowel flora by taking probiotics. Make sure you get the human strain of probiotics, such as Biocentials Ultra 45. Most probiotics come from not the human strain but animal products and, in my opinion, are not as effective. The herb golden seal is wonderful at killing microbes; so also take a good supplement of garlic (not odourless, as it's not as effective). Assess your diet and make sure it is not too high in sugars and refined carbohydrates. With all these changes you are likely to see an increase in gas for the first week as the bad guys die and the good guys replace them.

Send your health questions and details to Health+Wellness, Mind&Body, PO Box 2908, Perth 6800 or mind@wanews.com.au.

NATURAL BEAUTY

Ask natural skincare specialist Marian Rubock your beauty questions

I have oily skin and I try not to moisturise the parts of my face that are prone to breakouts. I just read in Mind&Body, though, that failing to moisturise triggers the sebom to produce more oil, which makes it worse. What should I be doing? Annaliese

The first thing I would suggest to reduce or eliminate the sebaceous glands over-producing is to change your diet if you haven't already. The culprit foods are dairy, wheat, processed foods, fatty foods, foods containing corn syrup and high-GI foods. If you want more of a summary have a look at my webpage:

marianrubock.com.au/services/your-face/acne-treatment/ — there is a brochure there you can download for further information. You should be feeding your skin twice a day, so it may be worth considering seeing a skin specialist and finding out what skin products are best for you. A skin specialist can help identify what triggers your skin to over-produce oil and will help to balance it. Skin that is not fed, or moisturised, will continue to over-produce oil if it is dehydrated. A good moisturiser would contain vitamins A, C, E and hyaluronic acid. Don't forget to protect with sunscreen.

Send your beauty questions and details to Natural Beauty, Mind&Body, PO Box 2908, Perth 6800 or mind@wanews.com.au.

These views are intended only for general purposes and health professionals should be sought for specific advice.

DREAM READER

Understand the meaning of your dreams with Charmaine Saunders

I had a dream last night about a guy I was seeing about two years ago who's a pro skier. I had a dream that we went skiing together and it was so much fun, we were hugging, laughing and kissing and it was a great dream. In real life, I was truly head over heels for him until I slept with him, then he didn't make much contact after that. He even started talking to my best friend like he used to talk to me. I was really upset and we haven't talked much since. Hilary

I get more letters about exes than any other dream topic. In general, these dreams simply reflect unresolved feelings and issues. Even when people have moved on and think they've forgotten about things, remnants of

the past can turn up in their dreamlife. Your dream is serving the purpose of putting a line under an ended relationship, but it's also reminding you of the fun you had together. Dreams can sometimes distort the facts of our lives but at other times they force us to face unpleasant realities or, alternatively, beautiful truths. Your relationship didn't end on the happiest note from what you say in your letter. Most dreams are trying to tell you something and yours is saying it's OK to let go of the hurt and just remember the happier times. You were skiing because that's his thing. Send this ex-love your best wishes while you're awake then you won't need to keep seeing him in your dreams. Relegate him to the past.

Send your questions and details of your dreams in total confidence to therapist Charmaine Saunders: charmaine@charmainsaunders.com or Box 637, Subiaco 6904.

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