



I HAVE DARK CIRCLES UNDER MY EYES ALL THE TIME. HOW CAN I GET RID OF THEM?

Dr Adrian Lim says there are a number of reasons why dark circles occur and they require different treatments.

"People with Mediterranean or Asian backgrounds are susceptible to pigmentation, which makes the eye socket look dark," he explains. Some dermatologists treat the condition with skin bleaching ingredients such as kojic acid or hydroquinone. "Or sometimes it can be a reaction to a skin condition such as eczema or dermatitis, which is treatable," he continues. For sinusitis and hay fever sufferers, a cure for dark circles may be as easy as taking an antihistamine tablet each day.

"Dark circles can also be an illusion caused by shadowing," says Dr Lim. "It occurs when there is an irregularity in the step between the eye and cheek, the socket is very hollow, or there is an under-eye bag."

Blue-toned circles are the result of capillaries showing through the fine skin under your eyes and most people get them, although they are more obvious with fair skin. Concealers and highlighters can lighten up the area. For serious dark circles, start with a pink-tinged concealer to neutralise the blue tone, then apply a skin-coloured concealer on top to brighten the area. We love Maybelline Instant Age Rewind Double Face Perfector, \$17.95, which is a skin-toned concealer and highlighter in one. It instantly delivers radiant results.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT THE WRINKLES AROUND MY EYES?

Eye creams that contain retinoids can help to reduce the appearance of crow's-feet. "They act on receptors in the skin cells and train them to reproduce more collagen over time," says Dr Terence Poon. The strongest of these creams contain retinoic acid, such as Retin A, and are available by prescription only. Ask your doctor if they're suitable for you, and how to apply them as there are potential side effects. Other forms of retinoids, such as retinol palmitate, are found in many over-the-counter eye creams.

Antioxidants can also hold back the hands of time, helping your skin to

how do I get brighter, fresher-looking eyes?

If the eyes are the windows to our souls, it's no wonder we want to banish dark circles, under-eye bags and mysterious tiny bumps. Our eyes are the first of our features to show signs of tiredness and ageing, but you can help the area look smoother, firmer and brighter. Cosmetic dermatologists Dr Adrian Lim and Dr Terence Poon reveal how. By Erin Whitty.

repair itself, so look for creams with a good cocktail of vitamins A, C, E, grapeseed, pomegranate, coffee berry or tea.

"An eye cream will keep your eye area moisturised to prevent dehydration and the lines from becoming more entrenched," adds Dr Lim. And don't forget to wear sunglasses and a hat.

WHAT ARE THE BEST TREATMENTS FOR DEEP LINES?

The only really successful treatments are in a cosmetic medical clinic. These include Botox injections (from around \$500), hyaluronic acid fillers (from around \$500-\$600) or dermatologic lasers (from \$2,000-\$5,000 depending on the laser and the treatment). "Botox relaxes the muscles to eradicate lines and stop deeper wrinkles from forming," says Dr Lim. Hyaluronic acid fillers have a gel-like consistency and are injected into the line to fill it out, lasting several months, while lasers work like a controlled injury to the skin, encouraging it to regrow collagen and elastin.

HELP, I'VE GOT BAGS UNDER MY EYES!

"Permanent under-eye bags are fat deposits under the eye," says Dr Poon. "They can be hereditary and generally become more pronounced with age and sun damage and can be removed with laser blepharoplasty, a form of eye surgery." If you have fluid under the eye, you can

reduce it by applying a cold compress or mask. "It doesn't matter if you wake up with puffy eyes," says Dr Lim. "After you get up and move around, everything equalises in around 30 minutes."

WHAT ARE THE TINY WHITE LUMPS UNDER MY EYES AND HOW DO I REMOVE THEM?

"Millia are similar to whiteheads," says Dr Lim. "They are compacted keratin (skin cells) and take the shape of a hard ball. Their location on the face makes them a nuisance." If you are susceptible to millia, switch your eye cream to an oil-free one. If the lumps do not disappear after a few weeks, ask your beautician or doctor to extract them for you.

DO HAEMORRHOID CREAMS REALLY REDUCE PUFFY EYES?

"Haemorrhoid creams might provide temporary tightening, however, they contain antihistamines and can cause allergic reactions. They are not designed for the sensitive eye area, so it's best to steer clear," advises Dr Lim.

SHOULD I USE AN EYE CREAM EVERY DAY?

"If you have dry skin, use an eye cream on a regular basis and use a very gentle, nourishing cleanser," says Dr Lim. "If you have oily skin, use an oil-free cream and only apply as needed." ■

using eye cream

- Don't overdo it. You will not receive any added benefits by using more than the recommended amount. In fact, you could be encouraging problems, such as millia.
- Extend the application of your eye cream out to your temples to keep the whole area moisturised.
- Using an under-eye concealer every day does not harm the skin. In fact, it will help keep the area moisturised. Just be sure to use one specifically formulated for the area.
- Sunlight weakens the skin around the eye. Look for a cream with an SPF and physical sunblocks such as titanium dioxide and zinc oxide. Chemical blockers such as aminobenzoic acid derivatives and benzophenones tend to be irritating.

visit the doctor when...

you have persistent under-eye fluid. It could be a symptom of an under-active thyroid, heart or kidney problem. "The skin around the eye is a good barometer for such conditions," says Dr Lim.



1. Benefit Depuffing Action Eye Gel, \$46, is a quick pick-me-up.
2. Ella Baché Age Protection Eye Contour Gel, 15ml, \$90, helps minimise fine lines and dark circles.
3. Glötherapeutics glöEye Restore, \$65, contains a fruit extract to lighten pigmentation.

4. Olay Regenerist Eye Derma-Pod Anti-Aging Triple Response System, \$39.99 (box of 24), aims to reduce dark circles and fine lines.
5. Dior Capture Totale Multi-Perfection Eyezone Fiber Patch, \$160 (box of 12), claims to immediately lighten and smooth.

6. Elizabeth Arden Ceramide Gold Ultra Lift and Strengthening Eye Capsules, \$95 (60 capsules), enhances collagen production.
7. Hylexin, \$165, was specifically formulated for dark circles.
8. YSL Lisse Expert Eye and Lip Anti-Wrinkle Concentrate, \$82.

9. Fusion Beauty LiftFusion Eye Lift, \$145, is said to provide instant results. It tightens and softens lines.
10. Clarins Eye Revive Beauty Flash, \$49, helps to tighten the skin and brighten the eye area.