

'Bottom line is most products don't deliver'



Facing facts ... after trying prestige brands, Carly Stephan, above, now has an inexpensive skincare regime that she says works just as well, if not better.

Photo: Lisa Wiltse

# Why good skin need not cost a fortune

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EXPENSIVE creams that claim to turn back the clock do practically nothing and sunscreen is the only anti-ageing product that works, dermatologists say. And consumers are being ripped off when they pay hundreds of dollars for so-called "cosmeceuticals" when a cheap jar of sorbolene is just as effective.

"Sunscreen is the No.1 product that can reduce blemishes and signs of ageing - it's that simple," Phillip Artemi from the Australasian College of Dermatologists said. "Don't spend a fortune on products because it's not going to make a difference.

"Why spend \$500 when you can spend \$5?"

The college's annual meeting has heard that, despite extravagant claims, skincare giants such as L'Oreal, Estee Lauder and Clinique don't subject their products to scientific trials. If the products worked, they could be reclassified as medicines, restricting their sale to prescription only.

"The bottom line is most products don't deliver," Adrian Lim from the college said. "There's a huge gap between what the cosmetic companies say and what's proven to be effective."

But the imminent release of results from the world's first independent clinical trial of anti-ageing creams threatens to change the way cosme-

ceuticals are sold. Professor of Dermatology at the University of Manchester, Christopher Griffiths, caused a buying frenzy last year after a test showed Boots No.7 Protect and Perfect actually worked.

He compared the cosmetic anti-ageing product, which sold for about \$35, to retinoic acid, a prescription drug used to treat severe sun damage.

The cosmetic product, available over the counter at the Boots chemist chain, was almost as effective as the medicated version. He is set to release the results of a six-month random controlled trial to confirm the results.

Dr Artemi said some products do contain ingredients known to work in the laboratory, such as retinoic acid

(vitamin A) and antioxidants, but concentrations are so diluted, they are inactive or do not penetrate the skin.

Washing with a gentle soap-free cleanser once or twice a day and applying sunscreen each day are the basis of a skincare regime, dermatologists say.

Double Bay student Carly Stephan, 26, daily uses Cetaphil foaming cleanser and moisturiser and QV SPF 30+ sunscreen on top. She has spent hundreds of dollars on high-end brand name products including MD Formulations and Biotherm, but has found cheaper chemist brands are just as good, if not better.

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