Personal Touches

Of the letters received from DAWN readers this month, many of them were inquiries about oily skin problems. Black women from all parts of the country asked, "What can I do about preventing blackheads and blemishes?" Personal Touches found some of the answers.

Blackheads and blemishes are basically caused by clogged pores — oil combined with dirt — a problem for many Black people who tend to have oily skin. But oily skin can be a virtue. Unlike dry skin which can lead to wrinkles and "crow's feet" at an early age, oily skin, with the proper care, can actually take years away from your physical appearance. (I have often heard older people say, "People with oily skin don't grow old.") But it can present a serious problem if not given personal attention.

Soap and warm water baths at least three times a day will help keep outer skin clear of dirt and grime. With fingertips, massage face gently while washing, giving special attention to "trouble" areas like the nose, cheeks, forehead and chin. Don't forget your neck and hairline. Follow each facial bath with a splash of cold water. It will close pores. (That is very important).

A MILD astringent mixed with cold water on a cotton pad will remove most of the surface dirt you missed. Use a LIGHT moisturizer especially if you plan to apply makeup. The moisturizer will protect your skin from harsh ingredients and will serve as a shield to keep make-up from entering inner layers of skin.

Once a week give yourself a facial. This will remove embedded dirt, make-up excess oils and "draw" those would-be blemishes to the surface. Use only those facial treatments which are determologist-tested and carry brand names of reputable cosmetic companies.

(If you're not satisfied with the results you can return product for refund.) Many drug stores carry good brands. Those products which are specially formulated for Black skin are usually found in department stores. Or you can make your own solution by using one egg white mixed with a half teaspoon of lemon juice. Combine the two by mixing with fork and spread over entire face and neck with fingers. Allow to dry (when it turns white and begins to crack), about 15 minutes. Remove with cool water. Follow with COLD splash of water. Pat dry. Apply light moisterizer. In warm weather treat yourself to a facial twice a week — you'll certainly notice a difference in your skin — it will thank you.

Diet plays a major role in the appearance of your skin and hair. Check it carefully to make sure you are getting the proper vitamins they thrive on. Stay away from excessive fatty, fried foods, sweets and plain "junk" which contains no nutritional value.

Personal Touches is your column — for and about Black women. Your comments and questions are welcome. Write: Personal Touches, c-o DAWN Magazine, 1800 11th St., NW, Washington, D.C., 20001.

Q: I have been reading your column and realize that I should take care of myself a little more. What I would like to know is do you have any more pictures of hair styles for today's Black women? I love to dress with my moods and according to what I'm doing and where I'm going.

Ms. D. K.
Baltimore, Md.

: Three cheers for you sister. At least you know you've got to take better care of yourself . . . let's hope you stay on the self-improvement wagon. Yes, we have pictures of the latest hairstyles for Black Women which will appear in this column each month. This month's sophisticated with a bit of sassiness thrown in by Art Dyson of Soul Scissors.

Q: While reading Personal Touches I learn many things about hair and skin that I never knew before. My questions are, can a moisterizer make the skin break out? What do you suggest I use on my hair for dandruff?

Miss T. P.
Shreveport, La.

A: If your skin is oily, then yes, a heavy moisterizer can invite skin problems. The last thing you need to do is to add oil to oil . . . you're pores will never breathe. A light moisterizer is what you need. Apply it to a clean skin only. Your dandruff problem may need a physican's attention. In the meantime, message scalp nightly with fingers to bring natural oils to scalp's surface and to loosen dead skin. Also, make sure you wash away all traces of shampoo and conditioner when washing. Residue can cause itchy scalp and minor irritations.

Q: I enjoy reading Personal Touches which is a part of the Sentinel Newspaper in California. I would like some advice as to my hair or an answer as to why hair has changed.

Since coming to California from the East coast, my hair has changed from thick and heavy to baby fine and thin. I have good quality hair and it is alarming how it has changed. I have been living in Los Angeles for 16 years. I am presently wearing a wig which is very becoming and of good quality, but now that it is warming up here, it is a bit uncomfortable on my head.

Ms. M. C. S.
Los Angeles, Calif.

A.: Your hair problem could stem from many sources: change in water, food, climate; anxiety, stress, heritary, for reasons unknown. I suggest you see a doctor or scalp specialist immediately before it's too late. Should you decide to go wigless, avoid styles which may require chemical treatments or straightening. They could make the situation worse. You might try sporting a curly natural or having it shaped into a genuine afro bush.

Q: I am a guy with extremely long hair. My problem is I have to get my sister to braid my afro every night to give it the look and feel I want it to have. My sister is getting very tired of me asking her to do this every night. But this is the only way I know to keep my afro fully blown out. When I don't get braided at night, the next morning it is hard to pick out and has shrunk tremendously. It does not look good at all. I don't like the blow-out because if makes my hair very straight and makes me look wild. Also, when I wear my afro cut in moist or rainy weather it shrinks. Can you give me a daily routine to follow which does not require a lot of time.

A: Your sister deserves a lot of credit for going through that hair braiding ritual every night for as long as she has. (I personally don't know of too many sisters, blood or not, who would.) To maintain that blow effect without chemicals you're going to have to get some braiding lessons. Braiding is not really as hard as it looks. It's like learning how to tie your shoes; once you've mastered it, you'll never forget it. To make it a little easier, spray your hair with cream rinse before attempting to braid your hair. Use brands that don't have to be washed out. Come through, it removes tangles, making the process easier. Braiding your hair just before going to bed isn't like cornrowing (style), so it doesn't have to be perfect. Begin by braiding entire head with 10 plaits as you get better, in-

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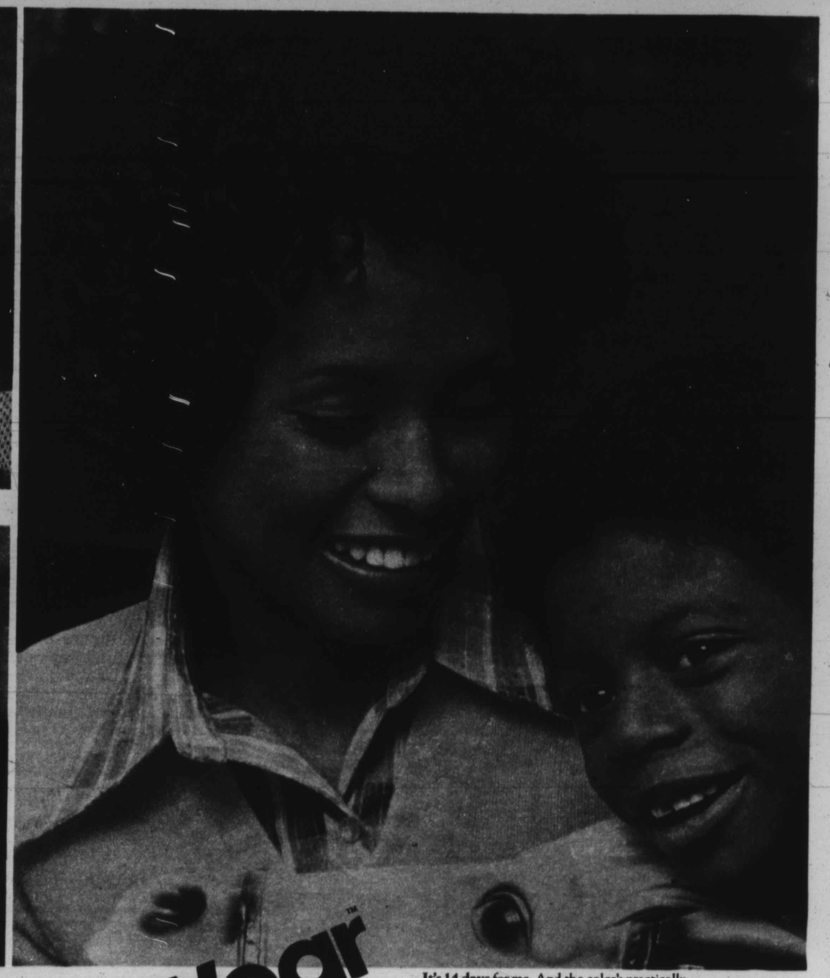
8 days since I colored it. Love the shine. And the way it wears! It's really new!

Even after 3 weeks, when I catch myself in the mirror, I like what I see.



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