

They're described as the windows to the soul but common issues like puffiness, dark circles and crow's feet can all hamper the eyes' true beauty and prevent them from giving the best impression of ourselves. We're here to help with advice on tackling the most common eye area issues that you can pass on to your customers.

Handle with care

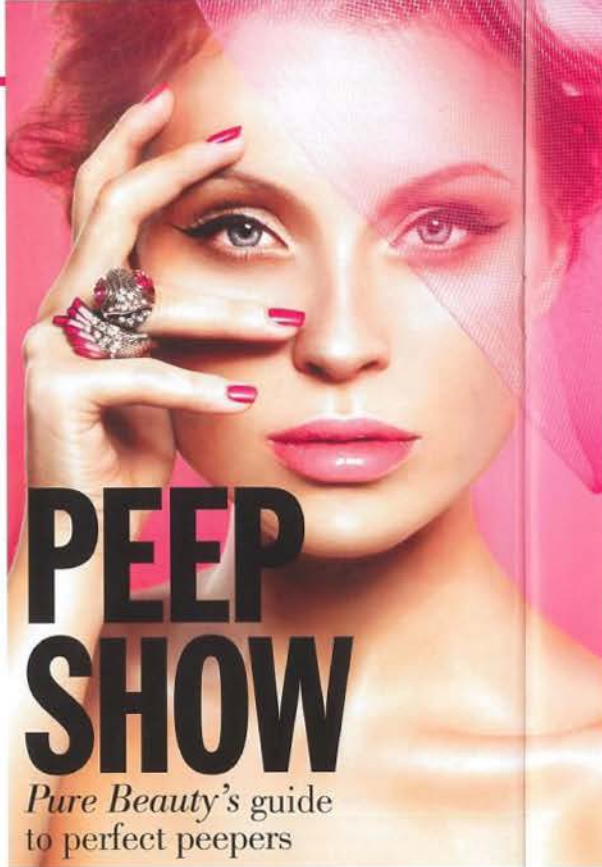
Many consumers believe that skin care designed specifically for the eye area is unnecessary and that normal cleansers, moisturisers and serums will do the job just fine. The eye care market is far from a ploy by manufacturers to pump up profits though, according to Art Pellegrino, Vice President of R&D at Elizabeth Arden: "The skin around the eye is ten times thicker than that of the face, with less collagen and elastin fibres and no subcutaneous fat," he says. "Also, the eye area, especially with the constant muscle contractions when we blink, is one of the first places signs of ageing appear. So for all of these reasons, the eye area should be treated with products specially designed to address these specific concerns." Targeted eye treatments also tend to be lighter in texture to avoid overloading and clogging, and free from common irritants like perfume. The way products are applied to this delicate area should also differ from the way skin care treatments are applied to the rest of the face, says Sophie Rock, Senior Brand Manager, Nivea Skincare: "Patting the eye product onto the skin with the fingertips gets circulation going without causing damage to this delicate part of the face. Make sure to pat from the centre of the face to the outside."

Puff away

Puffiness around the eyes has a number of potential causes, from allergies to lack of sleep to ageing and simple heredity. To tackle puffiness, Ada Ooi, facialist and founder of 001 London, advises: "Avoid rubbing your eyes; apply cold compresses if you have itchy eyes, because cold has natural mechanical soothing properties. Avoid irritants such as smoke and allergens where possible, and drink plenty of water in the day to avoid water retention and to keep your body cleansed – but not too much before bed, because sleeping in a flat position or on your back may make it difficult for your nasal cavities to drain excess fluid or mucus build up. Avoid excessive amounts of alcohol, especially before bed, and limit sodium (salt) where possible as excess sodium can cause bloating and fluid retention." Eating diuretic foods like celery, cabbage and bananas, and choosing eye products containing anti-inflammatory ingredients can also help, according to Michelle Sutton, Pharmacist and Director of Butterflies Healthcare (distributor of Eye Care Cosmetics): "Eye treatments containing plant extracts from melilot (sweet clover) have been traditionally used to reduce eye inflammation, while stimulating green tea helps excess fluid to drain away."

Lighten up

Dark under-eye circles also have a host of potential causes that



lead blood to pool in the blood vessels, which then become closer to the skin's surface and show through. Lack of sleep, allergies, nasal congestion, stress, anaemia and genetic predisposition can all play a part. Different shades of dark circles are caused by different factors, according to Ooi: "Grey dark circles are generally a genetic pigmentation, usually experienced by South Asian or Middle Eastern darker skin tones; a high concentration of melanin tends to develop around the eye area as early as hitting puberty. When applying eye care, gently tap with your fingers to enhance microcirculation. Also, you can explore make-up with mica so it reflects the light and makes your eyes look brighter. Brown tones are sun triggered dark circles, so don't forget your sunglasses every time it is sunny outside and think about applying your facial SPF on your eye contour as well. Green or purple bruise-toned dark circles are due to bad circulation caused by late nights and prolonged

use of the eyes. Keeping the eyes open for a long time increases the compression onto blood vessels under the eyes, slowing down blood circulation. Besides a good rest, an antioxidant-rich diet (for example, blueberries, cranberries and green tea) can really help." Ooi recommends opting for eye care products containing peptides like argireline and matrixyl 3000 to tighten skin and help prevent capillary leakage; vitamin K, thought to specifically treat dark circles; chrysin, a flavone from passion flower, which helps to promote the production of natural enzymes to break down pigments; and caffeine to treat both puffiness and dark circles.

Between the lines

As with the rest of the face, fine lines and wrinkles are inevitable but their appearance can be minimised by effective care and treatment. Ensuring make-up is removed thoroughly every day will help to prevent irritation and dehydration, both of which can exacerbate the appearance of crow's feet. Rock says: "Removing all trace of eye make-up will not only ensure the skin remains clean and unclogged, but also that any cream applied subsequently can effectively get to work. You need a formula that can dissolve make-up without the need to rub the delicate skin. Bi-phase formulas are really effective; the oily phase dissolves even waterproof mascara without needing to rub skin, while the watery phase conditions the skin and lashes." When it comes to formulas, serums, light creams and gels can all be effective as long as they are specially developed for the delicate eye area and the instructions are followed, applying only to the areas as directed. The latter are particularly effective if puffiness is a problem as it helps to retain coolness, while serum works on the deeper layers of the skin and cream takes care of the top layer. Look for antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and anti-ageing actions and ingredients for best results, formulas that are hypo-allergenic and ophthalmologist-tested, and avoid common irritants.

Not a dry eye in the house

Dry, itchy eyes can be sore and look unsightly, but can be fairly easily and instantly counteracted with eye drops or the new wave of sprays designed for use on the eyelids. Sutton says: "Eyes often feel tired after prolonged periods of reading or screen work often at the end of the day, usually because we blink less than, for instance, when we are talking. Dryness occurs as the water evaporates from the tears on the surface of the eye. Using a dry eye drop replaces the moisture that is lost and eases this discomfort as well as improving vision, as light can enter the eye more easily again. Dry eye drops can be used preventatively throughout the day and reminding yourself to blink and look away from your screen into the distance at regular intervals can prevent this. Eating a diet high in oily fish can improve the quality of the oily layer of tears."

the BRAND GUIDE

EYE CARE COSMETICS REGARD LAGON II EYE DROPS offer a new approach to beautiful eyes. This soothing, softening, paraben-free lotion beautifies and intensifies the natural sparkle of the eyes, refreshing, relaxing, purifying and reducing irritation. Just one drop in each eye will result in a radiant sparkle and instant relief, and it can be used three to five times a day. RRP £8.50, Butterflies Healthcare, butterflies-eyecare.co.uk.

CLINIQUE EVEN BETTER EYES DARK CIRCLE CORRECTOR is designed to treat dark circles instantly and over time, and is clinically proven to reduce their appearance by 30% in 12 weeks. Vitamin C and mulberry root gently lighten the eye area over time, while caffeine and green tea extract help to soothe and calm irritation from environmental aggressors and protect against oxidative damage. Meanwhile, translucent optics technology immediately brightens the eye area. RRP £30, Estée Lauder Companies, clinique.co.uk.

PREVAGE ANTI-AGING + INTENSIVE REPAIR EYE SERUM can be used on the upper eyelid as well as around and underneath the eyes to treat all eye ageing concerns. It contains a powerful antioxidant blend of idebenone, arazine and thioctamide to help improve the visible signs of ageing caused by free radical damage and cellular inflammation; Moisture Trap Technology to moisturise, plump and smooth skin; and optical diffusers and soft focus silicones to lighten skin and diminish the appearance of fine lines and wrinkles. RRP £55, Elizabeth Arden, elizabetharden.co.uk.

COLBERT MD UPLIFT EYE SERUM enhances the eye area's youthful suppleness, helps to reduce puffiness and inflammation and fights the appearance of dark circles. The formula includes fucus vesiculosus, an algae extract that targets a dark circle-causing enzyme; aescin, a horse chestnut extract that soothes and calms skin while reducing puffiness; glyceric acid (liquorice extract) to reduce redness around the eyes; and Phyto moist, a rich moisturiser that binds water to the skin's surface to fight dehydration. RRP £120, Colbert MD, colbertmd.com.

NIVEA DAILY ESSENTIALS DOUBLE EFFECT EYE MAKE-UP REMOVER features a two-phase extra strength formula that removes even waterproof mascara and eye make-up without irritating the sensitive eye area. The oil phase (top) effectively removes make-up while the aqueous phase (bottom) protects and cares for lashes without leaving an oily residue. It contains cornflower extract, which is well known for its anti-inflammatory and soothing properties, and is suitable for all skin types. RRP £3.40, Beiersdorf, nivea.co.uk.

