

Deep cleaning

Give your face a spring clean with a treatment favoured by celebrities. Ruth Supple reports on microdermabrasion . . .

TELEVISION presenters and film stars are said to swear by it to achieve that dewy glow on screen. Now you can try out microdermabrasion, newly available at The

Townshend Skin Clinic in Northampton.

The deep cleansing complexion treatment isn't like a typical facial, performed over an hour or so, but finished in 10 minutes and more clinical than pampering.

Dr Askari Townshend, owner of the clinic, said: "It is a deep cleansing facial that has a much deeper effect than a beauty treatment. Microdermabrasion really changes the way your skin behaves and clears out all those gunged-up pores which leading to spots and blackheads.

"Anyone who is anyone in the public eye will be having microdermabrasion," he claimed.

After a consultation, you lie back on a couch and tape is applied over your eyes to keep them closed and stop any crystals, used in the treatment, entering them.

The face is cleansed then the microdermabrasion begins, using a high tech machine known as a dermagenesis.

"This makes use of inert aluminium oxide crystals which are sprayed on to the skin," explained Dr Townshend. "These crystals will remove the top layer of the epidermis stratum corneum and the idea is that you take away anything nasty and cloudy cells caused by things like pollution, smoking and poor diet, leaving behind a fresh, youthful layer of skin with clear cells. Light is reflected off the skin making it look younger as well.

"This will leave you with a lovely, youthful sheen. Effectively, the microdermabrasion has cleared out



blackheads, dirty pores, improving the circulation, lymph drainage and blood flow of the skin bringing oxygen and nutrients to the surface.

"Also, the pummelling effect of the crystals stimulates fibroblast cells which produce collagen and elasticin, which helps with fine lines, wrinkles and decreased pore size," he added.

Microdermabrasion is not painful, just feels like someone is scratching your skin. Your face does get hotter throughout the treatment, although shouldn't be so hot that it is unbearable. The skin is instantly cooled with cold cotton wool before vitamin C serum, sunscreen and a recovery complex is applied.

It may take several hours for your skin to return to its normal colour and it is recommended to have the day before a special occasion, rather than the day itself.

"You need to have a course of microdermabrasion once a month to get longer term results," claimed Dr Townshend. "But you will see good results after one day and it's great to have done before a wedding or big night out."

The results of microdermabrasion are temporary, lasting up to 14 days before the stratum corneum builds up again.

"Skin is always regenerating, so that initial effect whereby the top layer of dead skin has been removed is temporary," added Dr Townshend.

He recommends microdermabrasion for anyone who smokes, sunbathes too much or uses sunbeds, has mild acne (not active), suffers spot breakouts or is worried about the ageing process.

"Once we get to about 27 or 28 our fibroblast cell production naturally slows down and that leads to the start of wrinkles," he said. "People who smoke or sun worship see that slowing down in fibroblast production much earlier, which in turn breaks down collagen and makes skin look older.

"It's becoming increasingly popular too with men, particularly those who suffer from razor bumps and breakouts."

Microdermabrasion can also be used on the body to reduce mild pigmentation and stretch marks. The décolletage is a popular area to be treated with microdermabrasion because it's often somewhere which becomes more exposed to sun damage.

Afterward a treatment you must use a moisturiser containing an spf of 15 at least because your skin is effectively new and needs to be protected from sun damage.

A microdermabrasion session left me looking like a boiled beetroot and red faced for about one hour.

My make-up glided on more smoothly the next day though and I did seem to have a glow to my skin.

But the comments from my two close friends really shocked me a couple of days later on a night out in town. They were whispering to each other and one blurted out the question: "Have you had botox because your skin looks incredibly smooth, like a baby's?"

I replied "no, of course not" but told them about the microdermabrasion. They instantly booked a session for themselves, having been so impressed by my results.

i ■ Microdermabrasion at The Townshend Clinic, 7 St Giles Terrace, Northampton, costs £75 for a single session or £65 per treatment if you buy a course. Telephone 01604 637934