

THE SKIN FACTOR

Dr Ifeoma Ejikeme knows the secrets to looking radiant – and shares her wisdom with *Life & Style*

BY CH-ANTELE KIMBERLEY

RIFEOMA EJIKEME, an NHS medical consultant and highly experienced aesthetic medicine doctor, has achieved more in her 34 years than most of us could hope in a lifetime.

Medical director of the Adonia Clinic, Dr Ejikeme has travelled the globe for extensive training in medicine, including a post-doctoral fellowship in head and neck surgery.

As well as being a highly trained aesthetic doctor, she is currently an honorary lecturer on the aesthetic medicine masters degree at Queen Mary University and an author of numerous papers widely nationally and internationally. She holds two surgical patents and has been involved in leading health policy implementation.

Life & Style managed to catch up with Dr Ifeoma at her warm and welcoming Adonia Clinic to discuss skin care needs and to dispel some common "black skin is hard to treat" myths...

Life & Style: How long have you been a doctor?

Dr Ejikeme: I've been a doctor since 2007.

Life & Style: Do you have treatments at the clinic specifically for black skin?

Dr Ejikeme: Not necessarily for black skin, but it's the way in which it is done. All skin types can have treatments, such as chemical peels or laser, but it is the type of chemical peel or the type of laser that you choose for black skin that's important. I have specifically thought of every technology that I have that can be used safely on black skin. I've gone the extra mile to figure out what works, and I've tried it on myself because I want to have the best skin, too. Almost all technologies can be used on black skin, but there may be some precautions you need to take both before and after.

Life & Style: Why do people find black skin so difficult to treat?

Dr Ejikeme: Black skin is not difficult to treat, that's the big-

gest issue, in the UK, for example, isn't uniform, not everybody is the same, so there is not one specific product. It's the general population so in most cases all the examples are on Caucasian skin. If you were treated on black skin you would know, but unfortunately historically that's how training is done, the same with many other professions. Black skin is not difficult to treat, you just need to know how to treat it.

Life & Style: What's the biggest skincare complaint among black people?

"I've gone the extra mile to figure out what works"

Dr Ejikeme: Pigmentation, that's the number one, but can be caused by many different things including spots, the wrong products, after pregnancy and oil-producing glands.

Oil is like the enemy, it's good because it keeps your skin nice and dewy, but it also causes pigmentation, irritation and inflammation.

The other is hair loss. With hair loss for women there are some conditions that are more common in people of colour, so lots of hair in the central part of the crown, which is nothing to do with hairstyles, and then there's traction alopecia, which is to do with hairstyles.

Life & Style: What advice would you give for dealing with hyper pigmentation?

Dr Ejikeme: Have a look at the products you are putting on your skin and have a conversation with someone who knows about hyperpigmentation, like myself.

It's not difficult, it's just about following a set of treatments and putting on the right products that are made for your skin type. Also, be flexible with your products, something that worked in your 20s, might not work in your 30s, something that your friend uses certainly won't

work for you. It's not everybody is the same, so there is not one specific product.

Life & Style: What products are best to treat hyper pigmentation?

Dr Ejikeme: Number one is Tyrosinase inhibitor. You've got a pathway to produce melanin and there are many different steps. It's a substance that blocks part of the pathway.

It doesn't whiten the skin, it just stops pigment being deposited in an abnormal way, so a treatment or product that has that in it, which can be chemical peels, or at-home products. If you can tolerate it, a retinoid is fantastic for black skin because it helps blend the pigment cells together so you get a more even skin tone but has to be in the right preparation.

20. Do a great one and vitamin C is great for all skin types, but if you have oily skin or your skin is not at the right place it can give you breakouts, so you need to slowly add the vitamin C, once you have a good skincare routine going.

Life & Style: What high street brands would you recommend?

Dr Ejikeme: Specifically for black skin, the Kane and Austin 10 per cent glycolic in my opinion is one of the best high street brand glycolics. That's for face and body which is great to smooth the skin and even out the skin tone. They also do pads, which are amazing.

The other brand is Rodial. Their glycolic is really good, too. Glycolics are great at giving you the appearance of smaller pores and making them look refined, evening out the skin tone, and helping with shaving bumps.

Life & Style: What's your favourite treatment?

Dr Ejikeme: I really love to do chemical peels. I love to do beautification injections as well, by looking at someone's face and determining where to place what. I get the most satisfaction when someone comes in with bad acne or really bad hyperpigmentation and I take them to the point where they no longer need to wear makeup.

To book a consultation with Dr Ifeoma Ejikeme visit



PORES FOR THOUGHT Dr Ifeoma Ejikeme gets her biggest pleasure from helping someone with acne recover so that they can go makeup-free at her salon, inset

