



# sleeping beauty

There's nothing more detrimental to skin health than a poor night's sleep. But help is at hand, writes *Stephanie Darling*.

It's well known that an unsettled night's sleep can lead to lacklustre skin. When you sleep, skin goes into repair mode, so if your sleep patterns are erratic, it will show on your face the next day. Bad sleep affects collagen production, which is essential for maintaining skin hydration and elasticity, and a lack of sleep can cause inflammation and a compromised skin barrier. Face-planting into your pillow can also leave creases on your skin.

"Bad sleep is often due to stress, which has a significant impact on skin, and chronic sleep deprivation is much worse than a short-term issue," says Sydney dermatologist Dr Ritu Gupta.

Gupta says poor sleep leads to collagen breaking down and decreased skin-barrier function, which means increased susceptibility to eczema, irritation and infection. "Collagen breakdown accelerates the ageing process," she says. And a lack of sleep decreases the lipids in the skin, which

leads to it sagging." So how much sleep is enough? The general rule of thumb is eight hours. Here are a few tips to help you get a good night's sleep.

Elevate your head by sleeping on two pillows, ideally in silk pillowcases such as those from Slip (\$115). Elevation decreases facial swelling and improves blood flow and lymphatic drainage, says Gupta. "Some extension of the neck means that finally our 'tech necks' can have a much-needed rest. Having your neck constantly flexed by looking at a phone screen creates horizontal lines. Sleeping slightly elevated means a reprieve from that position."

Sleeping on your back helps reduce the chest and face wrinkles that can occur if you are a side or tummy sleeper. Try an Orthopaedic cervical pillow (\$80, from Ergonomist), which cradles your neck, keeping it aligned with your head and shoulders. This position also helps reduce pressure on the neck muscles.

Night creams, with their rich, hydrating ingredients to plump, firm and brighten, are bedtime essentials. An oldie but goodie is Estée Lauder Advanced Night Repair (\$199), with tripeptide-32, hyaluronic acid and polyglutamic acid. Peptides serve as messengers between skin cells to encourage them to produce more collagen, accelerating wound healing and protecting the skin barrier.

For more night-time magic, we like Neutrogena Rapid Wrinkle Repair Retinol Pro+ Night Cream (\$33). And for eyes try Medik8 Advanced Night Eye (\$96), which has great de-puffing powers, boosts radiance and targets dark circles. (This cream also works like a charm under make-up.) For lips, try Laneige Lip Sleeping Mask (\$25).

Our final word: research shows that repair of DNA-damaged skin peaks at night – all the more reason to apply a great night cream to help the skin's natural repair system.



## ask STEPH

### How do I treat dry cuticles?

Dehydrated cuticles can turn into painful hangnails, so a little TLC is important. Apply a cuticle remover – we like Mavala (\$20) – soak for five minutes in warm water, then gently push your cuticles back with an orange stick. Finish by massaging in cuticle cream.

Send questions via Instagram, @mrssdarling.

## the LOVE list



**A change of season is a great time for a complexion-colour update. Play around with a bold-toned eyeshadow palette, a glowy face powder or some cheek love.** Prada Beauty Dimensions Durable Multi Effect Eyeshadow, \$155. Chanel Les Healthy Golden Glow Powder, \$112. Nars Hot Escape Cheek Palette, \$80.