

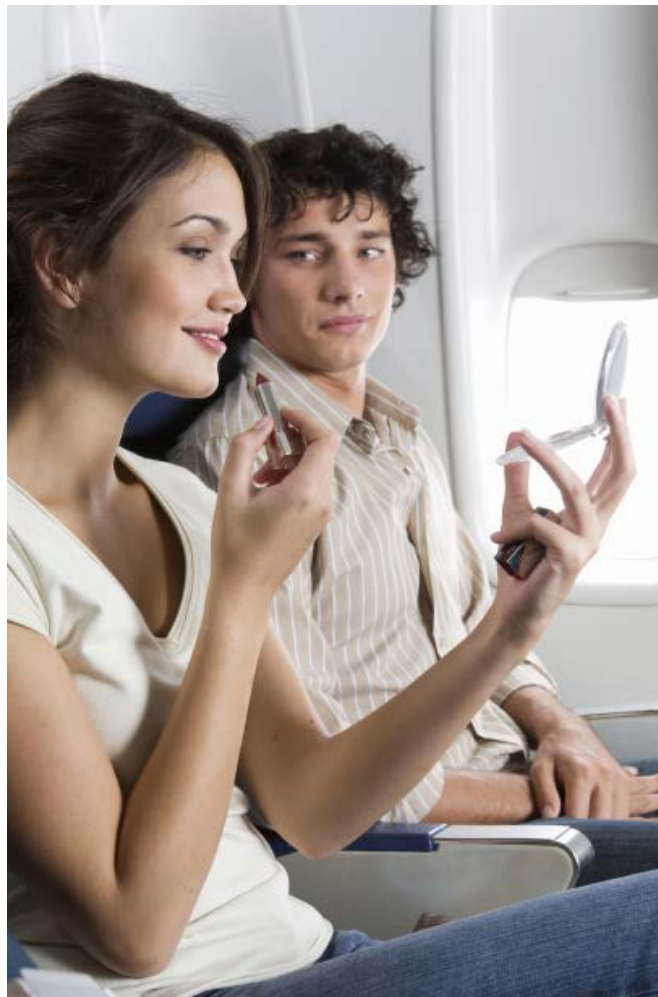
Come Fly With Me

Don't let your holiday play havoc with your looks—avoiding “plane face” can be easy with a little planning...

By Yi-Hwa Hanna

One of the best things about the holidays—and living in a region where, as a major travel hub, so many incredible destinations are just a hop and a skip away—is being able to easily jet off on exciting new adventures. But racking up those frequent flier miles can take a toll on your looks—from the moment you set foot on a plane, your skin is, essentially, under attack.

Experts claim the idea that stale air in the cabin makes you sick is a myth—according to Boeing, modern aircraft cabins are ventilated with highly effective HEPA air filtration systems that remove more than 99% of airborne bacteria, viruses and other particles, and the air you're breathing is actually a constant 50:50 blend of recirculated air mixed with fresh. To put it in perspective, thanks to those filters (if they're regularly cleaned and replaced), the air on state-of-the-art planes is probably a considerable amount cleaner than most stuffy office environments. When it comes to germs, it's not the air we should be worried about—it's



the surfaces. With such a high turnover of people getting on and off each plane every day, even the best wipe-downs can leave tray tables, fabric seats, carpeted floors, arm rests, seat backs and door handles covered in germs—and it's these surfaces that can put your skin (and health) at risk.

Even if you're a fiend for disinfectant and the air you're breathing is clean, the effect that cabin pressure and such high altitudes has on humidity levels can leave your skin in despair. According to experts, airplane cabin humidity levels typically hover at about 10-12%. With the air that starved for moisture, much like in an air conditioned office it begins sucking what it can out of any available source... including your skin. To fight back against this vampirical

air attack, your skin morphs into defence mode by releasing inflammatory mediators. Unfortunately, these mediators also attract inflammatory cells to the skin, resulting in reactions such as redness, hypersensitivity, itching and irritation. Dry skin can become drier and oily skin oilier as it tries to compensate for the lack of hydration, and breakouts are on the horizon.

Thankfully though, it's not all gloomy skies ahead—with the right products, “plane face” can be a thing of the past. First things first, take care of the hydration issue: In the few days before you travel, ensure you're drinking enough water so you're on firm footing before you even get on the plane—and don't forget to keep it up throughout your journey. Don't let the

liquids ban leave you feeling parched: Just carry an empty water bottle with you onto the plane and ask the cabin crew to fill it up at the start of the flight. “One of the most important things you can do during a flight is to drink a lot more water than you normally would to combat the dehydration,” says make-up artist and hair stylist Hannah Lisa (hannahlisamakeup.com); “I also take moisturiser with me, and keep putting it on throughout the journey.”

While you're taking care of hydrating from the inside, it's time to let the right products go to work from the outside. Ideally you should start with a blank canvas: “It's always best to remove your makeup when you're on the plane, especially for long-haul flights,” Hannah says, adding that we should only get away with wearing makeup on very short flights. “Adding on another layer prior to landing will make your skin look cakey and even drier,” she adds. Eiléen Lee-Connor, a makeup artist and beauty consultant (EileenBeauty.com) suggests using a baby wipe for easy makeup removal. If you must wear makeup, Hannah suggests picking products that contain moisturising properties: “Choose something that's been designed for dry skin and isn't particularly heavy— so a tinted moisturiser is better than a foundation.”

Much as you'd dress your body for cold weather, the key here is to layer your face. Begin with a serum or cream that penetrates the deeper layers of your skin, so your face is prepped and ready to absorb moisture. Look out for products that contain ingredients known for their water-retention properties, such as hyaluronic acid, lipids (found in vitamins A, D, E and K) and humectants (such as glycerol or glycerine, ceramides and lecithin). We like Dermalogica's Ultra Smoothing Eye Serum

(Dhs184), SkinCeuticals' Hydrating B5 Gel (8; Dhs286), philosophy's When Hope Is Not Enough Cream (9; Dhs158), and Estée Lauder's Advanced Night Repair (3; Dhs228). Using a face mask is another great option, but if slathering your face with a mask for the flight would leave you uncomfortable (or looking like Hannibal Lecter), using an intense mask at home, both before and after a flight, can also help. We like Rodial's Dragon's Blood Hyaluronic Mask (7; Dhs224), Elemis's Pro-Collagen Hydra-Gel Eye Mask (Dhs387), and Skin Republic's Collagen Infusion Face Mask Sheet (Dhs22).

Next, add a layer of oil—try Boots' Botanics Organic Facial Oil (Dhs40) or l'Occitane's Divine Youth Oil (Dhs495)—followed by a rich moisturiser. Getting some sleep will help you feel and look more rested, and an eye mask can give you a better chance of nabbing some quality shut-eye. Rather than use the standard-issue masks, bring your own silk one—it will be less likely to leave you with wrinkly creases.

Don't just stop at your face—your hands can severely dry out so it's important to keep them moisturised, too. Eilén suggests rubbing in cuticle oil throughout the flight—on both your hands and toes. We like CND's Solar Oil (Dhs42) and The Body Shop's Almond Nail



and Cuticle Oil (1; Dhs44). Tresses also pay the price of dryness—the lack of moisture can lead to more frizz or limp, flat hair that's trying to overcompensate for its thirst. Instead, use the flight time to nourish and protect your strands by rubbing in a hair oil—we like Moroccan oil (Dhs206) and Kérastase Elixir Ultime (2; Dhs242)—from the ears to the ends.

For a mid-flight boost, try a light spritz of a hydrating spray such as rosewater or Evian facial spray to refresh your skin, and plan to wash your face and reapply the layers from scratch shortly before you have to buckle up and prepare for landing. Meeting a special someone at the airport? A simple pop of colour added to lips or cheeks can perk you right up, but stick to light, sheer and moisturising products: “Lip glosses are sticky and uncomfortable so I'd avoid them and opt for a tinted

lip balm. For cheeks, look for a cream-based blush or something with gold flecks in it to help to warm up your skin tone,” Hannah says. On eyes, use a non-drying mascara like bareMinerals' Flawless Definition Mascara (5; Dhs66).

Once you've found your way home or to your hotel room, finish off your fix-it strategy with a gentle face wash (no matter how grimy you feel, avoid harsh, skin-stripping cleansers that will dry you out—we like Dermalogica's Special Cleansing Gel, 4; Dhs132) and exfoliate to remove any dead skin build-up. End with a fresh layer of a moisturiser or mask (and plenty more chugs of water throughout the next day), and don't forget to hit the sack for some quality sleep. We can't promise to help with your jet lag, but with your new air travel skincare regime firmly in place, you'll be able to enjoy your trip without worrying about the beauty aftermath. ■

FREQUENT FLYERS

Travelling all around the world on a regular basis, airline industry staff are pros when it comes to protecting their looks from the impact of long-haul flying. We asked them for their tips and tricks...

“I always carry Lucas' Papaw ointment with me. I use it mostly as a hand cream and lip balm but it's for everything, from burns to insect bites! I also try to keep it as makeup-free around the eyes as possible as the dry air in the plane can really irritate your eyes, then I use Garnier tint roll-on eye cream. It has a lovely light coverage and caffeine to perk up the skin around the eye after hopefully getting in some shut-eye.”

— Louise Dulka, Cabin Crew

“I always keep lips and hands moisturised and drink loads of water to prevent cracking/dry skin, as it is a really dehydrating environment! I also get my nails done regularly, along with a paraffin treatment to ensure hands and nails are well looked after—I was told at a young age that your hands give away your age the same way your face would, so they must be taken care of! I also put coconut oil in my hair before tying it up: It stops breakages and keeps hair smooth and static free.”

— Carley Taylor-Jackson, Cabin Crew

“When I'm travelling as a passenger, I like slathering my feet (and hands) with a thick and absorbent cream before putting on snugly plane socks. Anytime I feel like my skin is starting to dry out, I spray on some hydrating toner (that I've decanted into a squirty bottle), then apply serum before the toner has sunk in to help keep it plump for longer. I also use eyedrops regularly, since no matter how fresh I feel (or look), walking out of Arrivals with bloodshot eyes ruins it!”

— Hahua Fuqiuq, Pilot

100ML

The limit for carry-on liquid items allowed through airport security for most countries around the world—this includes cosmetics (and yes, by that we even mean lipstick and mascara). While many of our daily beauty picks do tend to contain less than 100ml in one container, if you have problems with products you need in-flight, try decanting them into mini travel bottles available from stores like Boots and Sephora. Don't forget a clear Ziploc bag to put them in—some countries require them.