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12 MONTHS *Get your teeth sorted*

Dr George Botha, a cosmetic dentist at De Waterkant Health in Cape Town, recommends you visit a cosmetic dentist at least a year before your big day. “This gives us time to address any major orthodontic issues,” he says.

He explains that there are a few ways to get straighter teeth, such as using short-term orthodontics like white braces, which have a white wire that other people can barely see from two metres away. These would typically be worn for six to 12 months.

You could also opt for clear aligners. These are sets of small retainers that move your teeth into the correct position. This technology can straighten teeth that are crowded, rotated or tilted forwards or backwards. But it is case specific, and may not be suitable for everyone.

Porcelain veneers are another option. They are a new front surface for a tooth, custom made from porcelain, and are used to correct broken, discoloured and misaligned teeth.

*For more information, visit
Dewaterkanthealth.co.za*

BEAUTY BRIDAL *countdown*

Your ultimate bridal beauty countdown to ensure you look (and feel) flawless on your big day.

By Candice-Lee Kannemeyer

9 MONTHS *Visit your dermatologist*

“Every bride has a different skin type, and a treatment plan should be specifically tailored,” says Cape Town-based dermatologist Dr Dilshaad Asmal.

“If you’re suffering with acne or pigmentation, start seeing a dermatologist nine months prior to the big day, as some treatments take three or four months before you start seeing results,” says Asmal.

Asmal’s tips for brides-to-be

- Get into the habit of using a good cleanser, exfoliator and moisturiser that is appropriate for your skin type. Antioxidant serums are also good for skin preparation.
- Don’t go for a facial a few days before your wedding; it could cause a breakout.
- Cosmetic procedures such as chemical peels, microdermabrasion, laser treatments like IPL, and skin peels should be done three to six months before the wedding.
- If you have any last-minute breakouts, a dermatologist can inject some hydrocortisone into the lesions to make them disappear.

6 MONTHS *Peel to reveal gorgeous skin*

Sonette Donker, a skincare therapist and owner of Skin ID in Johannesburg, suggests you book a course of peels at least six months before the big day. “The skin just gets better over time with regular chemical peels,” she says. Donker explains that a peel penetrates into the deeper layers of the skin, regenerating it from the inside. Because of this, it takes time to see proper results. “If you have six months, one peel a month should suffice. But if planning your wedding has managed to take up all your time and you only have three months, I suggest an intensive course of bi-weekly peels; four to six peels should do the trick,” says Donker.

She explains that most peels are safe to use on dark skin, but caution should be taken with “medium-depth” peels because of the risk of post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation. “Superficial and very superficial peels are ideal for



dark skin as they don’t cause as much inflammation as the medium-depth peels, and therefore eliminate the risk of post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation,” says Donker.

Pay attention to what you eat

A diet of processed food and caffeine is not good for your skin or your stress levels. Aim to eat a healthy mix of fresh fruit and veg coupled with lean protein like chicken and fish. Not only will your skin glow, you’re also likely to lose a few kilos.

Start an exercise routine

If you aren’t already exercising, now is the time to find a routine that works for you. Six months is plenty of time to get your body looking its very best. A few sessions with a personal trainer, although expensive, is sometimes just what’s needed to jump start an effective routine. Yoga and pilates are also great options, as they help you build core strength while relieving tension.

Thinking of wearing your hair natural for the big day? Start caring for it now

Thankfully, natural hairstyles are finally getting the attention they deserve. If you want to rock natural locks on the day, start caring for your hair now. Avoid heat and chemical treatments, cut off your dead ends, and try products that improve the condition of your hair and scalp.

3 MONTHS *Start body maintenance*

If you’re battling with cellulite or stubborn fatty deposits, try a course of Carboxytherapy, available at Skin Renewal clinics countrywide. The therapy involves injecting tiny amounts of carbon dioxide (CO₂) beneath the skin to break down fatty deposits and stimulate the production of collagen. The treatment has no downtime, and a single session can take anywhere from between 15 minutes to an hour. Carboxytherapy can also be used to treat love handles, saddlebags, tummy rolls, buttocks, and flabby arms. Eight to 12 sessions are usually required to treat cellulite effectively.

If the thought of needles scares you, you could try Lipomassage by Endermologie, which is also available at Skin Renewal clinics countrywide. The treatment involves massaging your body with motorised rollers that lift up and knead the skin in different directions, which stimulates a biological response that eliminates fat cells, reduces cellulite, firms the skin, improves lymphatic drainage, and reshapes contours. A minimum of eight sessions is recommended, but a course of 20 is suggested to see maximum results.

To keep your body looking good, invest in a home-care product that targets stubborn fat while firming and refining the skin.

For more information, visit Skinrenewal.co.za

TRY: Clarins Body Extra Firming Cream, R530.

Book your hair and make-up artist

“Secure your make-up and hair person three months before the big day,” advises Cape Town-based make-up artist Lisa Bailey. “That way, you’ll have plenty of time to chat through and think about various looks you feel may work.”

1 MONTH

Your hands will be on show because everyone will want to see your wedding ring. Ensure they look their best by applying hand cream after every wash. Get one cream with an SPF to use during the day, and one with active ingredients that exfoliate for night-time.

TRY: Estée Lauder Re-Nutriv Intensive Smoothing Hand Crème, R955, the crème de la crème of hand lotions. It contains anti-spot technology and ingredients that smooth and hydrate skin.

Eyelash extensions

Eyelash extensions are a great option for the big day. But to ensure you don’t have an adverse reaction to the semipermanent glue that’s used, you should try them at least a month before, which will also give you a chance to get used to the length and volume. Have them touched up a few days before the wedding.

TRY: Clarins Instant Definition Mascara, R285, which works really well to lengthen and add volume to lashes.



Sort out your braids

If you plan to wear braids, have them done at least two weeks before the big day. This allows you enough time to get used to the tension.

“To ensure any bruising or scabbing disappears, aesthetic procedures like Botox and fillers should be administered a month to three weeks before your big day,” says Dr Asmal. “Don’t try new cosmetic brands the month before your wedding as you may have an allergic response. Rather stick with what your skin knows and likes.”

1 WEEK
Do your weave

Have your weave done at least a week before your wedding day. You want it to look fresh, but not so fresh that it doesn’t look natural.

Have a trial run with your make-up artist and hairstylist

Chat to your make-up artist about which products you should purchase for touch-ups (get your bridesmaids to carry them) on the day. As a general rule, you should have:

- ▶ Pressed powder for excess shine
- ▶ Longwearing lipstick
- ▶ Eye drops to eliminate any redness
- ▶ Fragrance

TRY: MAC Prep + Prime Transparent Finishing Powder, R340, to set make-up while reducing shine and minimising pore size and fine lines.

TRY: Elizabeth Arden Beautiful Color Moisturizing Lipstick matte, R220, to coat lips in longwearing colour.

TRY: Narciso EDT by Narciso Rodriguez, R1 130 for 50ml (perfect to carry around). It’s a gorgeous mix of Bulgarian rose, peony, musk and cedar wood.

Get your brows shaped

Eyebrows frame the face and enhance the shape of the eyes. Perfectly shaped brows have the power to make you look

rested and youthful. Avoid tweezing your brows too much, which will leave you looking like an overexcited clown.

Book an appointment at one of the newly opened Benefit Brow Bars at selected Edgars stores, and learn how to put the wow back into your brows.

TRY: Eylure Brow Stencils, R64,99, available at Dis-Chem. These reusable stencils allow you to determine your ideal brow shape.

Get a bikini and leg wax

“To avoid possible irritation, get waxed no later than 72 hours before your wedding day,” advises Susan Vaz, owner of Legs Eleven in Green Point, Cape Town. “Also, the beauty of leg waxing is that it leaves the skin with a gorgeous sheen,” says Vaz.

THE DAY BEFORE

Get your mani and pedi

Have a mani and pedi the day before your wedding. Hands and feet need to look perfect, and you’re not going to be patient enough to sit and let polish dry for 30 minutes on your wedding day.

A gel polish is great as it’s longwearing and is likely to last for your honeymoon as well. Regular nail polish can also work; just ensure you have it on hand for any last-minute touch-ups.

TRY: Sally Hansen Miracle Gel Polish and Top Coat, R110 each, for a long-lasting and chip-free mani or pedi.

THE BIG DAY

Give your skin a boost by applying a gentle exfoliating mask in the shower. Before you have your make-up done, prep your skin with a hydrating serum.

Should you wake up with a blemish on your wedding day, dab a small amount of rubbing alcohol (you can buy it at your pharmacy) on to the spot several times throughout the day. It will help to dry and shrink the spot.

Wear a robe while having your hair and make-up done to prevent creasing your dress, or worse, messing make-up on it!

If you’re getting married outdoors, don’t forget to protect your skin with an SPF. Finally, remember that fragrance and hairspray can attract bees, so if you’re allergic, keep these to a minimum. ■

