

BEAUTY & CANCER

Beauty routines, rituals and products mean a lot to women. Cancer treatment doesn't change that. A makeup artist, a beauty writer, three actors and a survivor of 13 years explain why

BY MARYAM SIDDIQI

“While no one has any reason to be ashamed of their cancer, they have every right not to be defined by it either.”

—Sali Hughes in ‘Pretty Honest’ on the restorative power of makeup



Simple Spa and Shea Butter Cleanser

“I went to Pure + Simple, a Toronto spa with a holistic approach to skin care, for advice. Martina Gebhardt’s shea butter cleanser got me through treatment when my oily skin became dry.” Visit pureandsimple.ca for locations

A Gentle Elixir

“You can have a reaction to lots of things during treatment because your immune system is down. Kypris Beauty makes some of its oils without essential oils, so they are super gentle.”

In Good Hands

“It’s a time to really take care of yourself, like moisturizing your hands a lot because they get so dry. Aveda Hand Relief is by far my favourite.”

Nail Nurture

“I was proactive in taking care of my nails. I applied nail strengtheners like Butter London 999 Rescue System and Horse Power Nail Fertilizer before and after treatments, to prevent ridges.”

Mouth Healer

“You can develop mouth sores and tooth and gum soreness due to chemo. Weleda Salt Toothpaste kept my mouth in shape so I didn’t suffer the usual problems. The taste is strange at first, but once you get used to it, you may not go back. (I didn’t.)”

Oil Up

“I kept my body hydrated with coconut oil. When you lose your hair, your scalp gets dry and flaky so I’d slather my head in olive oil, let it sit for a few hours then wipe it off with a towel. I also love Yarok and La Bella Figura’s natural hair and scalp treatments. Rahua (rahua.com) is not the cheapest line, but it’s a great treat when you are feeling down and need a pick-me-up.”

Lipstick power: Why Marina Morsani, 67, never gave it up

“In 2001, I had a lumpectomy done on a lump under my right arm. I was diagnosed with breast cancer that same year. They removed the lump and my lymph nodes on the right side. I had chemotherapy eight times, every third week, and after that I had radiation for six weeks. I’ve now been cancer-free 13 years.

“I lost all my hair after the chemo—all my body hair, eyelashes, eyebrows. I was completely like a baby. I never bothered to draw in my eyebrows or put on false eyelashes, but I was working for a property management company so I had to wear a wig. And I always put on lipstick. I took care with my clothes, my face and my perfume. Even now that I’ve been retired for two and half years, I’m always ready to go out. Always dressed with my face on.”

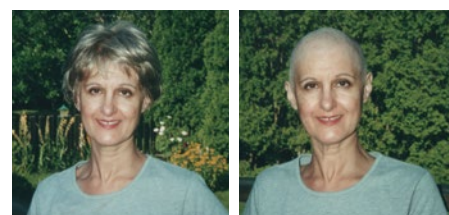
“I’d coloured my hair from the age of 19, when I started seeing a white strand once in a while, to age 54. But when I lost all my hair, I let it grow back white. I thought, “No, this time I will just see what I look like with grey hair.” That’s when I got the compliments. I had no idea what my hair would look like but it looks great.

“I’d always waxed my legs and my bikini line, but after the chemo, the hair did not grow back on my legs or underarms. I just have a little bit at my bikini that I wax now. But I’m against pedicures and manicures because I’m afraid of infections.

“I never realized how much I loved massages until a masseuse said I shouldn’t stimulate the body because the cancer can metastasize elsewhere, though I have never spoken to my doctor about it. Once they find out you have cancer, they don’t want to massage you.

“Before bed, I’d put Vaseline around my eyes because I found that in the morning I was very dry. But otherwise I kept the same system as before. My colouring changed, because of the grey hair. But the makeup routine is the same: eyeshadow, eyeliner pencil, and lipstick. That’s the only thing I would not live without: my lipstick.”

—Marina Morsani, 67, Saint-Lambert, Que.



MARTINA GEBHARDT SHEA BUTTER CLEANSER, \$45 (150ML), PUREANDSIMPLE.CA, KYPRIS BEAUTY BEAUTY ELIXIR III, PRISMATIC ARRAY, \$150, KYPRISBEAUTY.COM, BEAUTEABAR.COM, AVEDA HAND RELIEF, \$30 (125ML) AT AVEDA SALONS AND SPAS, AVEDA.CA, BUTTER LONDON 999 RESCUE SYSTEM, \$46, HORSE POWER NAIL FERTILIZER, \$24, BOTH BUTTERLONDON.CA, WELEDA SALT TOOTHPASTE, \$8, WELEDA.COM, BARLEAN’S COCONUT OIL, \$20, AT NATURE’S EMPORIUM AND HEALTHY PLANET, YAROK FEED YOUR YOUTH HAIR & SCALP SERUM ANTI-AGING TREATMENT, \$29, AT YAROKHAIR.COM, LA BELLA FIGURA BOHEMIA VERDE AROMATIC HAIR ELIXIR, \$28, AT ECODIVABEAUTY.CA

In their words

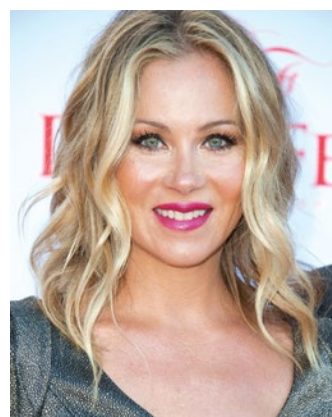
When you work in an image-obsessed industry, the physical effects of cancer treatment are more than skin deep. These stars spoke about their struggles



“You realize that no matter how much beauty, money, success you have – if you don’t have health, you have nothing.”

—Sofia Vergara

DIAGNOSED WITH THYROID CANCER AT AGE 28 IN 2000



“Your body just doesn’t feel the same, and you kind of wonder if it ever will.”

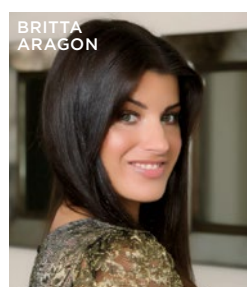
—Christina Applegate

A DOUBLE MASTECTOMY AFTER BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSIS AT AGE 36 IN 2008

“By the time my hair started growing back, it was very exciting. It was like a miracle.”

—Kylie Minogue

DIAGNOSED WITH BREAST CANCER AT AGE 37 IN 2005



MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Each of these skin-care silver linings came from a devastating diagnosis

Consonant: This Toronto-based skincare line’s HydrExtreme Serum (\$72, 10 mL) was created by founder Bill Baker for a friend who needed something gentle and effective to counteract cracked, irritated skin caused by radiation and chemotherapy. Available at consonantskincare.com

Tata Harper: There’s nothing medicinal about this luxury all-natural skincare line, but its founder Tata Harper created it after her stepfa-

ther was diagnosed with cancer in 2002, and was advised by doctors to replace his personal-care products with natural alternatives. Available at Murale.

CV Skin Labs: This line of balms and lotions formulated for very, very sensitive skin was founded by Britta Aragon, a survivor of Hodgkin’s disease who was also her father’s caregiver during his battle with cancer. Available at thedetoxmarket.ca.

HOW TO TAKE CARE

From booking facials to colouring regrown hair, we assemble pro tips for navigating the beauty realities of treatment

KEEP SKIN SOOTHED

Reduce dryness, flaking and irritation during therapy by taking sponge baths instead of full baths or showers, and adding mineral oil, oatmeal or oil-based soap to the water. Avoid products containing alcohol, which dries out hair, skin and nails.

—Canadian Cancer Society

SHELVE HOT HAIR TOOLS

Use the low setting on the hair dryer — or, better yet, let hair air dry — and avoid hot styling tools.

—Canadian Cancer Society

LASH WITH CARE

“If you don’t touch your eyebrows and eyelashes, there’s a chance they’ll stay in longer than the hair on your head. And by the time they fall out there will already be new growth there. Fake lashes can be annoying to deal with. Instead, darken the lashline with an eyeliner and a darker shadow. This gives the illusion of lashes.”

—Sheri Stroh

SPA VISIT? CALL AHEAD

The spa isn’t off-limits during or post cancer treatment, so don’t be shy about booking a facial—or giving one as a gift to a loved one. Tell the therapist about your cancer treatment at the time of booking, so they take extra care and wear gloves to avoid infection.

—Holly Sherrard, Dermalogica’s education manager

WHAT’S OFF LIMITS

Avoid manicures and pedicures — the risk of infection is too high. “If [clients] have a decreased immunity then their healing response may take quite some time. Or they might not heal at all,” says Holly Sherrard, Dermalogica’s education manager. Other off-limit treatments: waxing, peels, wraps and microdermabrasion. Ask your doctor before booking a massage.

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

The Canadian Cancer Society can provide information about complementary therapies, like massage. Visit cancer.ca or call 1-888-939-3333 for details.

Look Good, Feel Better offers free workshops across Canada on makeup, hair, skin and nail care during cancer treatment. Visit look-goodfeelbetter.ca or call 1-800-914-5665 to register or for more information.