



**Dr. Peter Vignjevic** MD FRCPC DABD, attended medical school at the University of Toronto, where he graduated first in his class and was awarded the Cody Gold Medal; he continued his dermatology training at the University of Toronto, was awarded his fellowship in Dermatology by the Royal College in 1997, and became a Diplomate of the American Board of Dermatology in September of that year. He has been in practice in the Hamilton area ever since.

## Soothing sensitive skin

**Alix Fuller:** *What factors determine whether skin is sensitive or not?*

**Dr. Peter Vignjevic:** This is largely determined by genetics and other things, such as associated skin diseases, climate, stress and other environmental factors.

**A.F.:** *What sorts of things can irritate sensitive skin?*

**Dr. P.V.:** There are many triggers. Hot water, harsh soap, solvents, oil, grease, deodorant soap, fragrances, preservatives, wind, sun, cold, dry heat, rough fabric such as wool, can all irritate sensitive skin.

**A.F.:** *How does sensitive skin react to them?*

**Dr. P.V.:** It becomes scaly, dry, red, itchy and inflamed.

**A.F.:** *What can a beauty advisor suggest to alleviate the irritation?*

**Dr. P.V.:** First of all, she should recommend that her customers with sensitive skin avoid irritants and

triggering factors. Also, they should use a good quality cleanser and moisturizer, and moisturize regularly. Bath water should be cool or lukewarm, and bubble bath should be avoided. They should have a humidifier in the bedroom, especially in winter, and wear cotton clothing as opposed to wool. She should suggest they use a gentle laundry detergent, such as Ivory Snow, rinse laundry twice to remove as much detergent residue as possible, and avoid bleach, fabric softeners and antistatic dryer sheets.

**A.F.:** *Can you suggest a good skin care regimen for sensitive skin?*

**Dr. P.V.:** I recommend La Roche Posay skin care products, because they meet my standards for effectiveness and cosmetic elegance. For cleansing, use a gentle cleanser, which also removes eye makeup, and choose a gentle, high quality bar soap to wash the body. To remove eye makeup, select a gentle remover

designed for sensitive eyelids. To moisturize, use a good quality product formulated for dry, sensitive skin. If the face is oily, find one that reduces skin oil and leaves a matte finish. For body skin, a rich, emollient is a good idea. Remember, the best time to apply moisturizer is after a bath or shower while the skin is still a bit damp, as it will work more efficiently. Always protect lips with a good quality lip treatment, and always wear a high SPF sunscreen.

**A.F.:** *At what point should a beauty advisor recommend that her customer visit a dermatologist?*

**Dr. P.V.:** A referral would be appropriate if the customer's symptoms are moderate to severe, or have failed to improve with the use of over the counter treatments. Also, if the beauty advisor notices an underlying condition such as eczema, rosacea, acne or seborrhea, she should recommend medical treatment.