

OXYGEN FACIALS By Sarah Siddons



With the increase in popularity of high-definition television, more and more celebrities are worrying about just how smooth their skin will appear on your TV screen. Because of this, many well-known personalities -- most notably Madonna -- have turned to oxygen facials, designed to plump and smooth the face immediately with no telltale red splotches left behind [source: Singer].

An oxygen facial delivers a mixture of hyperbaric oxygen, or pure oxygen at a high pressure, and anti-aging serum through an airbrush to the face and body. It's almost as though someone is using a tiny power washer to pump oxygen and moisturizer into the skin. People who use oxygen facials say the process helps makeup application because it gives the skin a smooth and moisturized surface [source: Singer]. Makeup also can be applied right after the oxygen facial, as opposed to traditional facials, which often require a 12-hour waiting period before you can apply any makeup.

The technology for today's oxygen facials was developed by an Australian company, and the procedure's popularity skyrocketed in the United States in 2006 after it was reported that Madonna was such a fan of the treatment that she had a machine in each of her homes [source: Parnass].

Many doctors say that the oxygen facial's effectiveness has not yet been proven because of a lack of clinical study. But those who offer the treatments say the facials can force oxygen and moisturizers into the skin for a temporary improvement. And the celebrities who swear by the treatment say it makes their faces flawless, even in a high-definition world.

Read on to find out why "Sex and the City" stars got oxygen facials.

OXYGEN FACIAL BENEFIT

An oxygen facial delivers oxygen, moisturizer, vitamins and antioxidants to the skin through an airbrush. The pressure and serum help to plump skin, which minimizes the appearance of wrinkles and increases circulation, which is believed to boost collagen production [source: Parnass].

The facial is said to benefit people interested in fighting signs of aging skin, but it's also believed to provide relief for those who suffer from acne or the skin disorder rosacea. But dermatologists aren't so sure. Although some doctors have begun offering the treatments at their clinics, others are more skeptical, including one that blasted the treatment's claims, essentially calling it ridiculous [source: Singer]. Instead of adding moisture and nutrients, some doctors think the process merely irritates the skin, causing it to swell temporarily and make wrinkles less apparent. Stars who have been on the receiving end of the airbrush, however, say they don't need clinical evidence to back up what they have experienced themselves.

It seems like oxygen facials have their fair number of supporters and detractors. As with many treatments it could take more research to know for sure either way.

Still, if Madonna's recommendation is enough to pique your curiosity, read on to learn about what kind of costs you're looking at.

Sexy Skin

Some of the leading ladies from "Sex and the City" reportedly underwent oxygen facials before appearing in the film version of the television series to help smooth their skin before heavy makeup was applied. Makeup artist Kris Evans said she did oxygen treatments on Sarah Jessica Parker and Kristin Davis before their shoots. She said that hydrating the skin created a better canvas on which to apply makeup. [source:BeautyHeaven].

Treatments can cost \$150-\$300

