

Beauty Countdown

Esthetician and skin guru **Sara Elizabeth Kuite** explains the beauty do's and don'ts before "I do." Step one: Put down the Cheetos and grab a glass of water. *By Kimberly Cunningham*

Start Here!

1 year before

Make decisions about what you want to improve (diet, hair length, skin appearance) and commit to a routine. "I want to grow my hair out and I want to lose 20 pounds." That's usually the first thing I hear people say," Kuite explains. With big changes like this, the more time the better. Put down the junk food. Sugar and a lack of healthy fats (like omega-3s) are some of the worst culprits when it comes to inflammation in the body.

6 months before

Begin scheduling monthly facials so your skin develops its own regimen and, if needed, go for the more aggressive treatments like peels, microdermabrasion, and lasers. Don't wait until the last minute to try and change your skin.

2 months before

Stop doing all major exfoliations and shift the focus to maintenance. "It's all about saturation and rejuvenation," Kuite says. Also, start to cover up with longer sleeves and turtlenecks to avoid getting any weird tan lines.

1 month before

Have your regular facialist examine your neck, chest, back, and bikini line. Address any issues now, as opposed to right before the wedding. Kuite cautions, "Your skin doesn't like surprises." If you aren't getting regular bikini waxes, start now and repeat in three weeks. Hair growth is on a three-week cycle and you want to know how your bikini line is going to react. For brides that want a sun-kissed glow, now's also a good time to test-run a bronzing treatment and see if you like the way it looks.

1 week before

Get your bikini line waxed, giving yourself several days to recover from red bumps and ingrown hairs.

2 days before

Get a manicure and pedicure. If you're going to spray tan, do so before your mani/pedi, and allow it to fully dry, which takes several hours (overnight is best). "You want that short buffer," Kuite says of the tanning effects.

The day of

Gently wash your face the night before, and rinse with cold water in the morning. Drink water and avoid too much caffeine, so you and your skin stay hydrated. Oh, and try to relax. Breathe! And have a fabulous wedding day.

Sara Elizabeth Skincare & Nail Boutique, 4026 Hawk Street, Mission Hills, saraelizabethskincare.com

Want help? If all of this seems a little overwhelming, or if organization isn't your strong point, you might need a health and beauty concierge. **Amara** will discuss your goals and book all of your appointments for you. 760.585.7030; amara-beauty.com



Photo: Amara

Beauty in a Bottle

Kuite says sleep is the skin's most powerful beauty treatment. But in a pinch, try this arsenal of creams and cleansers for picture-perfect skin.

BENEFIT: Fights acne
DRUG STORE: Burt's Bees Acne Kit, \$29

SPA: Ilike Organic Skin Care Mineral Exfoliating Wash, \$68

BENEFIT: Hydrating and anti-aging

DRUG STORE VERSION: Boots Botanics Organic Hydrating Day Cream, \$12

SPA VERSION: Priori Day or Night Complex, \$85

BENEFIT: Anti-aging and dark spot corrector

DRUG STORE: Neutrogena Rapid Wrinkle Repair Serum, \$20

SPA: Even Tones, \$125