

MY FIRST

SHEEP PLACENTA FACIAL



How far would you go for better skin? Jessica Tibbits braves the totally bizarre new treatment the A-list swear by

The invitation sounded so good: “Dear Jess, we’d love you to try the latest craze in beauty – the treatment celebrities like Victoria Beckham, J.Lo and Kim Kardashian are raving about...” “Sign me up!” I cried. And then I read the last sentence: “It’s a sheep-placenta facial.” What?

In theory, it shouldn’t bother me. I’m no wuss – as a child I spent a lot of time on my cousin’s farm, and even helped a cow give birth. But handling a placenta shielded by overalls and industrial-strength rubber gloves is one thing; having it smeared it all over your face is another. Still, as someone who’s in eternal pursuit of perfect skin, I decided to find out what all the fuss was about.

I realise as I make my way to Harvey Nichols’ Beyond MediSpa in London’s Knightsbridge that I am experiencing something I’ve never before felt prior to a facial: pure dread. All sorts of questions are running through my head: will there be blood? What if I taste some by mistake? And what the hell will it smell like?

Luckily, my therapist, Leanne, seems to sense my fear (could be the shaking

hands) and sits me down for a briefing. “Don’t panic. At no point will I put *actual* sheep placenta on your skin,” she reassures me. “The mask, serum, concentrate and moisturiser contain stem cells harvested from sheep placenta – no smell, no blood.” So why placenta? “Stem cells can repair every cell in the body, and those from mammals are much closer to the ones in the human body than the plant stem cells used in most skincare, so they’re far more effective at repairing skin, helping to reduce pigmentation and boost collagen,” she says.

Feeling slightly more relaxed, I ask a question I immediately regret: how exactly do you get hold of the

placentas? “They’re whipped away from the sheep right after they’ve given birth – it doesn’t cause any harm. If it wasn’t taken away, the sheep would just eat it.” So things could be worse.

Feeling slightly nauseous after that last nugget of information, I follow Leanne through to the treatment room. A thorough cleanse is followed by microdermabrasion to blast

away dead cells, then a cooling, moisturising mask. So far, so fragrant... Then Leanne announces that she’s about to apply the concentrate, the product most rich in sheep placenta. I inhale deeply to brace myself against the smell I anticipate, but when I’m forced to breathe again, I discover it’s really not that bad. There’s a faint whiff of vinegar, but that’s all. Leanne treats me to ten minutes of red-light therapy – holding infrared-light plates to my face to help the concentrate penetrate deep into my skin – finishing with five blissful minutes of massage.

So am I a convert? After all the panic, the facial turned out to be totally pain-, smell- and drama-free. My skin – rough and bumpy an hour ago – feels smooth as a baby’s bottom and has a serious lit-from-within glow. Whether that’s down to the placenta or just the fact I’ve had a thorough exfoliation and moisture dose, I’m not sure, but I leave Harvey Nics happy and hydrated. A week on, the initial glow has faded, but my skin is definitely looking more sprightly – plump and blemish-free. And a sentence I never expected sits at the top of my to-do list: “Book in for next sheep-placenta facial.” *Sheep placenta facial, £185 for 1 hour and 15 minutes, available at Beyond MediSpa, Harvey Nichols London (020 7201 8595) and Edinburgh (0131 524 8332).*

“Will there be blood? And what the hell will it smell like?”

