



# Is Bee Venom the Secret to Kate Middleton's Flawless Skin?

By Stephanie Nolasco, April 18, 2014



With an 8-month-old future king to care for and countless royal duties, the Duchess of Cambridge still manages to glow — and her secret is one that’s been getting a lot of buzz.

The UK-based Express reports that Kate Middleton is a fan of bee venom to keep her skin smooth and supple. The 32-year-old mother even allegedly applied it onto her face for her globally televised wedding to Prince William in 2011.

“The treatment was recommended to Kate by her stepmother-in-law Camilla (Duchess of Cornwall), who swears by the product,” says Express. “And the bizarre-sounding substance, which promises to plump up skin by tricking it into thinking it’s been stung, is also a big hit with A-listers, including Victoria Beckham, Simon Cowell, and Kylie Minogue.”

Previously, The Telegraph reported that Camilla is a “firm fan” of the Heaven Bee Venom anti-aging skincare line, developed by UK-based facialist Deborah Mitchell. The products promise to eliminate frown lines and wrinkles, promoting youthful, radiant-looking features. Highlighting bee-sting venom, described as “an organic alternative to Botox” by the Daily Mail, Mitchell insists this is needle-free option to turn back time.

“Camilla gave Kate her first pot of Heaven Bee Venom face mask soon after her engagement—and later encouraged Kate to have her first bee venom facial with Deborah Mitchell herself,” states the Daily Mail.

And it could just be something that works: A 2012 study revealed that honey could be effective at treating and preventing wound infections. Some experts even commented that honey could possibly solve common skin ailments including acne and infections caused by eczema. But while dermatologists won't be prescribing honey to their patients anytime soon, bee venom might have promise.

"Bee venom has long been used in traditional Asian medicine to alleviate various ailments," says Dr. Julia Tzu, clinical assistant professor of dermatology at New York University School of Medicine. "Interestingly, there is some scientific data, the majority generated from Asia, that explains why bee venom can be potentially therapeutic to the skin. Honey bee venom contains a substance called mellitin, in which studies have found to possess antibacterial, antiviral, and anti-inflammatory properties."

"A recent study published this year found anti-inflammatory properties of mellitin against the acne bacteria when applied to the skin in experimental animal models," adds Tzu. "In another small study, cosmetic products containing purified bee venom was found to decrease acne on human skin."

However, when asked if bee venom can be used to prolong the signs of aging, Tzu says it's not currently being recommended by dermatologists and it could even cause potentially life-threatening allergic reactions. Also, there are very few studies proving it could eliminate wrinkles.

"Bee venom is probably just the latest in a long line of fad anti-aging products," says Dr. Jessica Krant, assistant clinical professor of dermatology at SUNY Downstate Medical Center in New York. "It's marketed to be 'topical Botox,' but in fact even the actions claimed for bee venom have nothing to do with weakening the facial muscles of expression, the true mechanism of Botox."

Dr. Krant also points out that the method of applying bee venom cream, like the one created by Mitchell, is one that's similar to what you can do without spending a penny.

"Topical creams containing bee venom claim to make the skin 'think it's been stung by a bee,' purportedly causing an increase in blood flow to the skin, resulting in a flush (a suggestion of youth and health), and also causing more fluid to collect in the surface, filling out fine lines temporarily," explains Krant. "The problem with claiming that bee venom is doing these things is that massaging your face while applying moisturizer does the exact same thing."

Another factor to consider? Recent photos of Camilla aren't exactly proving bee venom removes fine lines completely.

With medical experts having doubts on bee venom for skincare, it looks like Middleton's real secret is simply great genes and possibly a makeup artist on hand to make the Duchess look her royal best.