

Newslinks for the week of January 28th:

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In the Pink for Valentine's Day

Fixes to Put Your Best Face Forward

BY RACHEL HERSCHENFELD, M.D. – DERMATOLOGIST – January 31, 2008



According to the information on the back of my shampoo bottle, 15 percent of women send themselves flowers on Valentine's Day. I find that hard to believe. As far as I know, none of my friends have ever done that, and I think I would have run across at least one person sending themselves flowers by now, if almost one out of every seven women did. This is not to say that I can't understand why some women would want to send themselves flowers. Valentine's Day can magnify insecurities about being loved and feeling attractive. Fortunately, there are a few quick fixes that can still make a difference in the appearance of your skin in time for the big day.

A few simple steps can improve the appearance of your skin even at the last minute. Avoid overdrying with soap or toners. Instead, use a gentle, hydrating cleanser, such as Cerave. Or exfoliate with a mildly abrasive scrub like Dove Gentle Exfoliating Daily Facial Cleanser. Always use a moisturizer, especially if you are going to apply makeup. Hydrated skin looks and feels smoother, and make-up is easy to apply evenly and smoothly on moisturized skin. If you plan ahead and give yourself some time, there's even more you can do.

Botox is well known as a quick, reliable way to smooth lines on the forehead and around the eyes. But did you know that it can improve your smile? Botox can be used to lift the corners of the mouth that turn down with age, turning an unintentional frown into a content, happy expression. It can also be used to make an asymmetric smile even, to smooth "smoker's" lines around the mouth, and to prevent the upper lip from riding up and showing too much gum line with smiling. Botox can also lift the tip of the nose and smooth a wrinkled chin. Botox in the lower face must be administered with care by a physician who is familiar with these applications to avoid interfering with normal expressions, but in the right hands it is a home run.

Light-based procedures continue to evolve, and many provide significant improvement with little down time. If you're still committed to waxing or plucking to remove dark facial hair, consider laser hair removal. Multiple treatments are required for the best results, but hair is usually noticeably thinner after each session. Nd:YAG lasers, such as the LaserGenesis, can improve facial redness



and skin texture. Many patients see improvement after one or two treatments, although optimal results are seen after a series of 4 to 6 treatments. Broad-spectrum light sources, such as the Titan, can help to firm sagging skin under the chin and on the neck. Improvement continues for three to six months after treatment, but may be noticeable soon after the first treatment. You can leave the doctor's office and go right back to work, or play, immediately after any of these procedures.

Even when you can put your best face forward, Valentine's Day can be challenging, and this, unfortunately, can be reflected in your skin. Conditions such as acne, rosacea, psoriasis and eczema are known to become worse in some people when they are under stress. If you suffer from one of these problems, make sure to be consistent with your treatment regimen to minimize the effects of stress around any important social event. Don't worry too much, however, about tasting chocolates from your valentine. Conventional wisdom holds that chocolate is bad for your skin. In fact, recent studies of diet and its effects on the skin have implicated consistently increased dairy intake with acne flare-ups. One study showed that restricting high glycemic foods (such as those containing sugar and white flour) is associated with improving acne. There is no evidence, however, that occasional consumption of sweets makes acne consistently worse. And for most of us, indulging in a bit of chocolate will just make Valentine's Day a little sweeter.



Aging and the Face

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Aging takes a toll on the body and the signs are often most visible on the face. The **skin** becomes thinner, drier and less elastic. Fine lines and wrinkles develop around the eyes and corners of the mouth. Fat deposits under the cheeks shrink, causing the eye sockets and face to appear sunken or hollow.

Genetics play an important role in the rate of skin aging. Some people maintain youthful looks well into older age. Others may develop signs of aging in late twenties and early thirties. Excessive exposure to sunlight hastens skin aging and can contribute to the development of freckles, age spots, spider veins and patches of rough, leathery skin.

Facial expressions can also influence the development of wrinkles. Each time the facial muscles are used to make an expression (such as a smile or frown), ridges and grooves form beneath the surface of the skin. With aging, the skin loses some of its ability to "spring" back to its smooth state. Eventually, this leads to the development of permanent lines and wrinkles.

Using BOTOX® for Wrinkles

BOTOX® Cosmetic is a purified form of the botulinum toxin, a substance normally associated with some kinds of food poisoning. When injected into a muscle, the drug blocks the transmission of nerve impulses between the brain and muscles, leading to

temporary paralysis of the target muscle. BOTOX prevents the affected muscle from moving out of its relaxed state, inhibiting the formation of the wrinkle lines.

BOTOX injections are used in the treatment of frown lines, forehead wrinkles, crows feet and other fine lines and wrinkles caused by facial expressions. The treatment is the most common nonsurgical cosmetic procedure in this country. Last year, the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery estimates more than 3.18 million BOTOX injections were given in the U.S.

A New Wrinkle Fighter

BOTOX can be very effective for reducing wrinkles caused by facial expressions. However, the treatment is temporary, lasting only three to six months. Thus, the procedure must be repeated to maintain the effects.

Now there's another option on the horizon, called GFX. GFX uses bipolar radiofrequency ablation to target the nerves associated with facial expression wrinkling, rather than the muscles (as with BOTOX). The process is called Percutaneous Selective Radiofrequency Neuroablation (PSRN).

Cameron Rokhsar, M.D., a Cosmetic Dermatologist with New York Aesthetic Consultants, says, patients are given an oral sedative and local anesthetic to minimize discomfort. Then, a needle probe is inserted through a tiny puncture in the skin. The physician locates the target nerve by releasing a low level of electric current from the probe. The current stimulates the nerves and causes the muscle to contract. Once the correct nerve is identified, a controlled dose of radiofrequency (RF) energy is aimed at the target. The RF energy intentionally damages a portion of the nerve, disrupting its ability to send a signal to the muscle. Without that signal, the muscle can't contract, preventing the formation of that specific facial expression wrinkle.

Rokhsar says GFX is being used on the eyebrow area. But he anticipates the treatment will one day be used for other muscle-related wrinkles. GFX is still not a permanent procedure because the nerve eventually regenerates. However, the treatment lasts about a year - much longer than BOTOX. Currently, GFX is approved as a subcutaneous lesion generation system. A clinical trial is underway to determine how long the effects of the treatment will last.

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New Lip Implants from Pigs Being Tested

Updated Jan 27, 2008 at 0:3 EST.

The January/February 2008 issue of the Archives of Facial and Plastic Surgery includes a study on the potential of better lip augmentation using material created from pig's intestines. The material, Surgisis, is made from the lining of the small intestine of pigs. A Reuters story notes that team leader of the study, Dr. Edmund A. Pribitkin said, "*Short-term lip augmentation was achieved in all 8 patients,*" he and his

colleagues report. Four patients requested an additional implant upon follow up, while one of them required a third..."

Dr. Pribitkin and his team from Thomas Jefferson [University](#) in Philadelphia are testing the use of Surgisis in other areas such as wrinkle reduction.

The FDA-Approved material was made by Cook Biotech Inc.



Can Botox Kill?

It Already Has, Says Consumer Advocacy Group Calling For "Black Box" Label Warnings

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25, 2008

(CBS/AP) A public interest group is petitioning the Food and Drug Administration to increase the warnings on the popular cosmetic and drug Botox.

Dr. Sidney Wolfe of Public Citizen Health Research Group said severe reactions, including deaths, have been linked to the product.

Botox and another drug, Myobloc, use botulinum toxin, which blocks nerve impulses to muscles, causing them to relax.

But in a few cases, the toxin has spread to other parts of the body, resulting in problems including paralysis of respiratory muscles and difficulty swallowing, potentially leading to food or liquids entering the lungs and causing aspiration pneumonia, Wolfe said.

Public Citizen sought so-called black box warnings on both products.

"What we're saying is, nobody should be dying of Botox, and they wouldn't be dying if the government and the companies were doing a better job warning people," Wolfe said to ***Early Show*** co-anchor **Maggie Rodriguez** Friday.

Botulinum toxin is approved for such uses as easing muscle spasms and crossed eyes. Botox is also approved for one cosmetic use — treatment of wrinkles between the eyebrows.

Botox maker Allergan did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the petition.

According to the petition, there have been 180 reports of adverse effects in the United States, including 16 deaths, with four children among the fatalities.

While the possibility of dangerous side effects is noted in the detailed information available for the products, that isn't always available to the public.

The enhanced warnings would make people aware of the possibility of side effects, so they could seek emergency medical help if they experienced early symptoms such as dry mouth, difficulty swallowing, difficulty breathing, slurred speech, drooping eyelids and muscle weakness, Public Citizen says.

"In Britain and in Germany, letters were sent out last year to every doctor, warning them about the early signs of problems," Wolfe told Rodriguez.