

Newslinks for the week of November 5th:



ULTRASONIC FACIALS: THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH?

By Ashley Campbell

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When you think of ultrasounds, you may associate it with pregnancy and the medical field. Now spas are using it for facial rejuvenation.

At La Dolce Vita Salon and Spa in Augusta, Merideth Thomkins has been doing ultrasound facials for nearly four months.

"Some of the benefits you can exfoliate the dead skin cells making for a clear, healthier complexion without the redness and irritation associated with microdermabrasion," said Merideth Thomkins, Skin Therapist.

Merideth says you get great results without the irritation other procedures may cause.

And Dr. Achih Chen, Chief of Plastic Surgery at MCG Health System agrees.

" There's no prolonged redness, there's not a healing wound as a result of the treatment and it's almost in many cases, it can be a lunch time treatment," said Dr. Achih Chen, Plastic Surgeon.

In fact, one treatment usually just takes an hour.

We were there when Shivah Tosigh got her first ultrasound facial.

A ground wire was wrapped around Shivah's hand because the procedure involves electronic sound waves.

About two hundred and fifty volts push antioxidants and vitamins into the layers of her skin, much deeper than what your hands could do.

And when the procedure's over, you see immediate results.

"The clients definitely feel rejuvenated, refreshed, their glowing, they have a new skin," said Thomkins.

"I think the thing that's important with ultrasound facials is that the expectations are realistic," said Dr. Chen.

And how does Shivah feel about her first ultrasound facial? "Oh it was wonderful. The process was very, very good , the smell was good and it makes me relaxed," said Shivah Tosigh, Client.

So, if you're looking for a quick and painless way to reduce the signs of aging, an ultrasound facial may be your fountain of youth.



Botox Offers Shot in Arm for Arthritis Sufferers

Small trial found it eased shoulder pain caused by osteoarthritis

By Kathleen Doheny

Posted 11/8/07

THURSDAY, Nov. 8 (HealthDay News) -- Botox seems to relieve shoulder pain in arthritis sufferers, a preliminary study found.

"We don't recommend people start using it until we have the definitive study," said study author Dr. Jasvinder Singh, a staff physician at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. He said his study was small, and more patients needed to be assessed before the treatment could be recommended.

Singh was to present his findings Friday at the American College of Rheumatology annual meeting, in Boston.

Singh and his colleagues randomly assigned 43 patients with moderate-to-severe osteoarthritis pain in their shoulders to one of two groups. One group received a single dose of the botulinum toxin type A and lidocaine, a local anesthetic. The other group got a dose of saline (salt water) plus the lidocaine. Neither group knew what they were receiving.

Osteoarthritis is the "wear-and-tear" type of arthritis, and the risk for it increases with age, obesity and other factors. About 21 million Americans have this form of arthritis, according to estimates from the Arthritis Foundation.

More than 5 percent of adult Americans suffer shoulder pain lasting more than a month in a given year, according to Singh. At the start of the study, the participants' pain levels were greater than 4.5 on a scale of zero to 10, with 10 being the worst pain.

The researchers compared the pain levels before the botulinum treatment to levels assessed 28 days later. They found that 38 percent of the botulinum group had a 30 percent or better reduction in their pain scores, compared to 9 percent of the saline group. Those who got botulinum also reported more improvement in shoulder function than the saline group.

The toxin may work, Singh speculated, by reducing the release of certain proteins from nerves in the joint. And that, in turn, may decrease the pain sensation.

Dr. John Hardin is chief science officer at the Arthritis Foundation, and a professor of medicine at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, in New York City. He agreed that more study of botulinum for arthritis pain was needed but was optimistic. "It appears very promising, that this is useful in achieving pain relief," he said.

Hardin added a caveat, however: "It probably needs to be made clear this is not thought of as an intervention that stops the progression of the disease." And he warned those who might get the treatment that just because the pain was reduced didn't mean the disease had gone away.

"It's still in the experimental stage," Hardin said.

Besides easing facial wrinkles, Botox is also used to treat bladder problems, migraine headaches and excess sweating, among other conditions.

The new study was funded by the North Central chapter of the Arthritis Foundation, the Mayo Clinic Center for Clinical and Translational Research, and the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. In the past, Singh has received travel funds for other research projects from Allergen Pharmaceuticals, which makes Botox, he said.

THE 
INDEPENDENT

'Filler' injections can cause permanent damage, say doctors

By Senay Boztas

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The world's leading cosmetic surgeons claim thousands of people face permanent damage from new facial "filler" injections. They warn the risks faced by people having such treatments in the UK have also increased because of government failure to regulate "cowboys".

Douglas McGeorge, consultant plastic surgeon and president of the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons, said: "The public needs to be realistic about the outcomes it can expect from new cosmetic treatments, at least until solid clinical evidence of their efficacy exists."

He added that failure to bring in statutory regulation of people offering such treatments would lead to serious health problems in the future. "To foster a 'wild west' approach [of

industry self-regulation] is not only an affront to reputable professionals who follow the rules, but ultimately creates an unsafe environment for the public," he said.

His warning was echoed by other plastic surgeons who are warning that long-term use could permanently damage skin.

Dr Daniel Marchac, an eminent French surgeon, said he and other surgeons share deep concerns about facial fillers. He said he had personally been consulted by at least 25 patients already with untreatable fibrous tissue and subcutaneous changes that he believes were caused by "abuse" of these injections – long-term use that he defines as twice a year for four years. Dr Marchac has asked 900 surgeons in Belgium, France and Switzerland for more evidence and he plans to report his findings later this month.

Dr Marchac believes the results of his survey could show that up to one in 20 of those who have had facial filler injections may suffer irreversible damage to the facial tissue.

There are two types of injection: one intended to be permanent and another to be absorbed into the skin, and then repeated after six months. Dr Marchac said both are potentially risky. "All of the permanent fillers are creating, from time to time, serious problems with bumps and deformities, and sometimes you have to operate. All serious plastic surgeons agree one should avoid permanent fillers," he said. "We will see in the future patients of 50 who have had 15 years of fillers with fibrous, tough tissue we wouldn't be able to do anything with. The serious things are the permanent fillers, and the second is abuse of resolvable fillers."

His concerns echoed those of Dr Sherrell J Aston, surgeon director and chairman of plastic surgery at New York's Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital.

"Botox is OK, but I have concerns about the other fillers," he said. "My concern is that as time goes on with these foreign materials placed in the face, there are going to be quite significant problems. I am really concerned that in 15 years we will see a lot of people with lumps and bumps and no good way to treat it."



Staying fabulous at 50

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WASHINGTON -- If 50 is the new 40, it must be because women can wipe years away more easily than ever before. Cosmetic docs say the newest fillers, laser and plasma treatments can wipe years from your face -- without a knife.

"I'm hoping it will improve the appearance, the feel and the texture of my skin," said Arlene Kaplan who is utilizing a new plasma treatment.

Portrait skin regeneration heats skin deep within the surface. Doctors say the four thousand dollar procedure promotes new collagen growth in 30 minutes. The downside is about a week of reddened skin that looks and feels like a sunburn.

Zap away under-eye bags with a new treatment called Aluma. Until recently, doctors didn't use lasers around the eyes because it could damage the retina this technique uses radio frequency energy.

"We can treat upper lids all the way down to the eye lash. We can treat lower lids all the way upward," Eliot F. Battle, Jr., M.D., said. You'll need a few of the 250-dollar treatments over several months.



There are other new quick fixes for those who want to spruce up their image.

Faces aren't the only body part adding years to your look ... what about your hands? "It's often a part of the body that's often neglected. They don't put sunscreen on them and so they start to age." dermatologist Marilyn Berzin, M.D., said.

The most popular treatment is Sculptra -- an injectable and long lasting cosmetic filler that adds volume to the skin and keeps tendons and blood vessels from showing. The price? About one thousand dollars.

Thousands of women will experience hair loss. Now it can be treated with medications, hair transplants and even lasers that stimulate the hair follicles -- helping women come close to keeping the full hair of their youth.

There are other new quick fixes for those who want to spruce up their image, like surgery-free nose jobs. And don't think only women are going in for these procedures, doctors say they are seeing more and more men come in, too.

Research:

PLASMA TREATMENT: Portrait Skin Regeneration is a new type of treatment used to fight wrinkles. The therapy uses plasma, which is the fourth state of matter. The plasma replaces old, damaged collagen with significant amounts of new collagen. Plasma energy is used to change the underlying layers of the skin, but does not affect the outer layer during treatment. It works by transferring nitrogen plasma energy into the collagen layers beneath the skin's surface. New collagen growth is triggered, and the facial architecture develops new contours. In addition to wrinkles, the therapy can be used to:

- Improve skin texture
- Minimize acne scars
- Reduce pore size
- Improve surface discoloration
- Tighten skin

BACKGROUND: An oculoplastic surgeon who specializes in reconstructive surgery of the eye usually performs Eyelift surgery, also known as blepharoplasty. The Aluma Skin Renewal System is an eyelift treatment that requires no invasive surgery and takes only 15 minutes to administer. Experts say it is a safe, gentle, pain-free way to remove wrinkles and excess skin from around the eyes. The process begins when a technician uses a special device to direct radio frequency energy at the skin. As collagen in the skin heats up, it comes apart and makes room for new collagen to develop in its place.

SCULPTRA: Sculptra is an FDA-approved treatment intended for restoring and/or correcting the signs of facial fat loss, or lipoatrophy. It is made from poly-L-lactic acid and is commonly used to correct lipoatrophy in people infected with HIV. Sculptra has also been used to improve the appearance of aging hands. The results can last up to two years, but may require occasional touch-ups. Multiple initial treatments are recommended for optimal results. Very rarely, and usually after the first treatment, red bumps can occur under the skin and can be noticed when the area is pressed.

HAND ME ANOTHER: Other treatments to combat signs of aging hands include chemical peels, sclerotherapy and microdermabrasion. Chemical peels cause age spots to disappear while tissue appears less transparent. This treatment costs about \$600. Sclerotherapy involves injecting a sclerosing solution into unsightly veins, causing them to turn white and gradually disappear. This treatment costs about \$325. Microdermabrasion is a superficial skin polishing procedure that involves sanding off the first layer of skin with tiny crystals. This procedure costs about \$175.

HAIR LOSS: Hair loss in women is not nearly as common as it is in men. However, more than 20 million women in the United States are affected by it. Heredity plays a big role in female hair loss, but stress, illness, and poor nutrition can also cause it. The most popular ways to treat female hair loss are: hair transplantation, non-surgical hair replacement (hairpieces), FDA-approved pills, FDA-approved topical medications, and hormone correction.



Medical Spa Warnings

Cut Risks By Asking Questions

POSTED: 7:48 pm PST November 6, 2007

SAN DIEGO -- In need of a facial? Want to smooth out some fine lines? Maybe a nice massage would do you good. The choice for most when it comes to these minute makeovers is a medical spa.

You don't have to be a doctor or even have a medical background to open a medical spa. According to the American Society for Dermatology, improperly trained staff has led

to led to a sharp rise in the number of serious complications from medi-spa treatments gone badly.

Christy Cammann, 42, found doctors "intimidating," so she chose Spa M.D., a top-rated medical spa. It offers services from simple facials to surgery.

"I've had Restalyn put in the tear troughs right here under the eyes, I've had Botox on my forehead, in the middle here and all around my eyes and I've had a laser peel as well," she told NBC 7/39.

But when performed by untrained staff, the procedures have led to a sharp rise in serious complications like burns or scars.

Board-certified dermatologist Doug Keel said to avoid problems by asking just five questions.

First, "Who's the doctor?"

"The most important thing to look for in a medical spa is a physician on board who is there during the treatments," Keel said.

Your second question should be, "Is the doctor in the spa, at the time of your treatment?"

"They need to be on site. They absolutely have to be on site. These things come up in a matter of seconds," Keel said.

If the doctor's not doing your procedure, your third question should be to ask who is? Chris Phebus, registered nurse and manager of Life Med-Spa, does most of the procedures himself. He said your fourth question should be to find out about the staff's training and experience.

"I would ask, how many procedures have they done," he advised.

Keel said, "If someone is doing the procedure for the first time or even the first 10 to 20 times, they probably don't have the experience that you would want doing these procedures."

Your fifth and final question should be to ask if the spa rents or owns its laser machines? The company should own their equipment to be very familiar with using it, the experts said.

Another danger sign, said the experts, are prices that are too low. For example, the makers of Botox charge everyone the same price: \$500 per bottle.

That means if you're getting it at half price, it may be overly diluted and not effective.