



Beyond Moisturizers

*The brave new world of
cosmetic dermatology* **Krista Zintz**

As retirement age gets pushed back, people in the workforce are feeling the need to look younger. Many women — and an increasing number of men — think that their sagging outward appearance doesn't match their still-vibrant inner self. Traditionally, the only option for turning back the clock on an aging face used to be a rhytidectomy, more commonly known as a facelift.

When Janet Martin, 58, moved to a high-paying public-relations job in Toronto a few years ago, she investigated getting a facelift to look more like her generally younger colleagues. “But when I found out it would involve five hours under general anaesthesia, I balked and decided to leave lengthy surgery for a time when I had a life-threatening medical condition like blocked arteries or cancer,” she says.

SURGERY

Anaesthesia aside, a surgical facelift entails approximately three weeks of recovery time, not to mention costs that routinely run upwards of \$6,000 and can go as high as \$15,000 — the figure Janet was quoted. And as with any surgery, there are definite risks, including scarring, bleeding, infection and permanent facial numbness.

A facelift will last from five to 10 years, but you may need companion surgeries along the way, such as a brow lift or an eye tuck, in order to keep your face looking evenly aged. As well, you

may feel the need to hide your neck as its skin goes south while your face stays looking smooth.

In the end, Janet decided to leave her visage as it was, but what other options did she have? According to Dr. Benjamin Barankin, a Toronto-based dermatologist and medical director of Toronto Dermatology Centre (www.torontodermatologycentre.com), there are quite a few alternatives for people who want to look younger without the costs and risks involved in a surgical procedure. “Cosmetic dermatology is booming with newer, more effective treatment options for enhancing and rejuvenating our skin,” he says.



BOTOX

“Botox is by far the most common cosmetic procedure because it is very safe, has 20 years of experience, no downtime and almost no pain, and works very well and consistently,” notes Barankin. Botox is a purified protein of botulinum toxin (from the food-poisoning bacterium) and is injected into specific areas of the face. This neurotoxin relaxes the muscles that cause wrinkles, with results typically lasting from three to six months.

Botox injection is an outpatient procedure that takes minutes as opposed to hours and requires no recovery time. Cost depends on the number of injections you need, but prices run in the hundreds instead of the thousands. Side effects with Botox are rare and not permanent. According to Barankin, fewer than 1% of Botox patients will

experience minor and temporary drooping of the eyelid or eyebrow, and this effect always resolves itself within a few weeks. The average cost to treat frown lines, for example, is \$200 to \$400, but Barankin notes that “the exact number of units you require to achieve the look you want will be discussed with you by your dermatologist during your confidential consultation.”

INJECTABLE FILLERS

Restylane and Juvéderm are also viable options for smoother, younger-looking skin. The procedure, costs and pain level are similar to those with Botox injections, but the results tend to last a bit longer, from six to 12 months.

Restylane and Juvéderm are made of hyaluronic acid gel, which is a substance almost identical to our own skin, so side effects and healing time are minimal and are as minor as slight redness or bruising, which can be covered with makeup. These filler gels are most commonly used to treat laugh lines and lip and forehead wrinkles, as well as to fill out deep under-eye hollows. You will need to discuss the cost of Restylane or Juvéderm injections with your dermatologist, but they average around \$600 to \$1,200 per session, depending on how much volume loss needs to be corrected.



MICRODERMABRASION

Microdermabrasion is a deep exfoliation procedure that uses a special vacuum system to remove the outer layers of skin while delivering a special physician-grade serum back into your skin. This

two-level approach clarifies your face to bring out the younger-looking skin beneath. It is a painless procedure that has no down time and no side effects. A series of six 15- to 30-minute sessions, typically two to four weeks apart, is recommended for optimal results. Cost ranges from \$125 to \$150 per session, but keep in mind that the recommended number of sessions is six treatments separated by three to four weeks.

Microdermabrasion is excellent for removing sunspots or age spots, fine lines and mild acne scarring, and it also helps refine pores. Chemical peels have similar pricing and benefits; your dermatologist will determine which treatment option is best for you, although sometimes combining peels and microdermabrasion on an alternating basis gets you the benefits of both. To maintain that healthy glow from microdermabrasion treatments, dermatologists recommend using a daily sunscreen.

“If you are considering any of these facial rejuvenation methods, make sure your physician is certified by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada,” says Barankin. “These procedures can only be guaranteed as safe and relatively painless when administered by qualified medical professionals.”

So if you're feeling the need to rejuvenate your skin but don't want to go under the knife for a surgical nip and tuck, it may be time to discuss other options with your dermatologist.

FACE-CONSCIOUS CANADIANS

According to a 2007 online survey of 1,500 respondents conducted by Medicard Finance Inc. and Plastic Surgery Statistics Canada, 20% had had some type of cosmetic surgery (such as a facelift), while 33% had had a non-surgical procedure (such as Botox or injectable fillers). More than half (56%) said they were satisfied with the results of their cosmetic surgery.