



Skin regenerating procedures: What are your options? (Part 2)

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While wisdom might come with age, no one likes the wrinkles that accompany the aging process.

"The demand for anti-aging treatments has skyrocketed in the last five years or so," says Autumn Wills, PA-C at the Aesthetic Institute for Rejuvenation and Lipodissolve. "There are many choices when it comes to antiaging treatments. It all depends on what you want. Do you want plastic surgery? Or do you want to go the non-invasive route?"

With various cosmetic giants offering beauty and youth in a jar, and physicians offering anti-aging treatments, a lot of us are willing to spend the extra bucks to look young again.

An informal poll of physician offices in Southern Illinois reveals that the average age of clients opting for anti-aging treatments seems to be 40 plus and beyond. "But we do have younger people walking in for treatments like lipodissolve," Wills says. "My oldest patient is a very young 83!"

Experts agree that facial aging largely depends on several factors including: heredity, health behavior (sleep, sun exposure, cigarettes), state of health (medical and psychological), effect of stress, and weight stability.

In order to regenerate skin and thereby look younger, there are a variety of skin resurfacing and regenerating procedures available today.

"Microdermabrasions, chemical peels, facials and skin care lines are popular with those who want little to no downtime at all," Wills



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says.

Microdermabrasions usually involve the application of tiny rough grains to buff away the surface layer of the skin, in order to stimulate cell renewal and collagen production for healthier, clearer, more youthful looking skin.

There are a variety of microdermabrasion products and treatments, including medical procedures, salon treatments and creams and scrubs that you apply yourself at home.

Chemical peels are topically applied acids that increase cellular turnover which in turn refines the epidermis. Helping to slough off the dead cells on the surface of the skin, the choice of acid is usually dependent on skin type and can range from beta or hydroxyl acids to glycolic and salicylic peels.

Since there is no downtime associated with this procedure, it's not unheard of for people to just walk in to a facility for a lunchtime peel and go back to work afterwards.

According to Ted G. Van Acker, DO, FAOCD, dermatologist and owner of Southern Illinois Dermatology, Egyptian Revival Day Spa, Dermacare Body Boutique and the Egyptian Fitness Gyms, the micro peel is the most popular non-invasive anti-aging treatment at the Egyptian Revival Day Spa.

"The micro peel is a three step process that consists of dermal planing, glycolic acid application and cryotherapy," Van Acker says. Correcting damage associated with chronological aging, the micro peel is an effective treatment with little to no recovery time.

Facials involve the use of customized products to cleanse, tone, exfoliate, and protect your skin in order to improve the overall tone and texture of your skin. The Egyptian Revival Day Spa is one among many in the region, offering a variety of exotic facials designed to provide antioxidant treatments for stress and environmental skin depletion, as well as superior conditioning and moisturization for men and women alike, all while being of anti-aging benefit to the skin.

Portrait® Skin Regeneration by Rhytec is an FDA approved treatment that is fast becoming a popular option. "We got Rhytec before it was even available in Paducah and St. Louis," says Nelson Gauto, MD, plastic and cosmetic surgeon, of Southern Illinois Plastic Surgery, in Herrin. "Currently, Southern Illinois Plastic Surgery and AIR Lipodissolve are the only ones which offer the treatment in Southern Illinois."

Not a laser, radio frequency or light based treatment; Portrait® uses pulses of nitrogen plasma instead to regenerate your skin. Unlike microdermabrasions, Portrait® works without removing the epidermis of the skin, which acts as a protective dressing until new skin regenerates.

A good option for improving sun spots, increasing collagen production, treating fine lines and looking refreshed and younger, experts say it reduces the risk of infections, scarring and pain which could occur with other technologies like the laser.

"I did the Rhytec on my mother and she was very happy with the results," Wills testifies.

The Perfector uses micro-currents to stimulate cellular activity and new tissue regeneration, helping to diminish fine lines, wrinkles, crow's feet and drooping skin, by stimulating the facial muscles to tighten up.

"My patients love it," says Kristen Jacobs, MD, family physician, at Wise Health Solutions in Mount Vernon. "I have personally had a microdermabrasion and a session with the Perfector. I prefer the Perfector, since I want to be able to relax during the procedure and it offers me that."

Clients are put on 8 to 12 treatments depending on their age and skintype and then put on a maintenance plan once a month. "Its like Botox® in that it trains your facial muscles over time," Jacobs says.

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Called the "knifeless facelift" by the popular press, the Perfector rejuvenates your looks by increasing blood circulation, collagen and elastin production. "Besides the Perfector we also offer different kinds of hydrating facials, depending upon skin type," Jacobs says.

Mesolift facials use ultrasound to effectively lift off all the dead layers of cells to reveal beautiful, brand new, glowing skin underneath. "Most women do see a noticeable difference after a Mesolift Facial," says Linda Hostalek, Doctor of Osteopathy and owner of Holistic Healing Arts in Pomona and Herrin. "I've had patients with skin discoloration problems, look 20 years younger with just one treatment."

Most people get their face, neck and décolletage done. With no downtime whatsoever, Hostalek says it does not cause chemical irritations or physical abrasions like other treatments can. The ultrasound penetrates deeper than most topical preparations and over time increases collagen production.

"If you feed your collagen its going to grow thicker," Hostalek says. "If you continue to feed it, the fine lines and even the deeper lines become less and less over time."

Injectables

Everyone's favorite non-invasive anti-aging treatment centers around the use of injectables. "We are able to obtain amazing anti aging results using a simple device that has been in every doctor's office for over 100 years," Van Acker says. "With a needle and syringe we inject not only Botox® Cosmetic but also dermal fillers such as Sculptra™, Restylane®, and Juvéderm™ to fill wrinkles, folds and augment lips. We also use a needle and syringe to inject Lipodissolve to dissolve away the unwanted fat pads of the face and body that occurs as we age."

Soft tissue fillers can help fill in and plump up creased and sunken areas of the face, temporarily restoring smoother, more youthful looking skin. "They are used alone or in conjunction with a resurfacing procedure, such as a laser treatment, or a recontouring procedure, such as a facelift," Gauto says. "Injectable fillers can be bioengineered or derived from the patient's own fat."

There are several brand name fillers with various ingredients out in the market. Collagen filler ingredients may be human-based or bovine-based (derived from cows).

Hyaluronic acid is a filler, which is also used to treat frown lines, crow's feet, lips and nasolabial folds. Restylane and Juvéderm™ are some of the brand names of fillers containing hyaluronic acid.

"Juvéderm™ is an injectible gel that is indicated for injection into the mid to deep dermis for correction of moderate to severe facial wrinkles and folds," Van Acker says.

Having had the opportunity to work with Allergan (the makers of Juvéderm™ and Botox® Cosmetic) to collect data for the FDA, Van Acker has been injecting Juvéderm™ for nearly a year now and says he is very impressed with its results and longevity.

"The latest on offer (in the anti aging battle) at Southern Illinois Dermatology that I am really excited about is Juvéderm™ Ultra and Juvéderm™ Ultra Plus," he says. "In mid August, the FDA gave approval to now advertise that Juvéderm™ Ultra results last up to one year and Juvéderm™ Ultra Plus results can last greater than one year. It is my opinion that we will find the results of Juvéderm™ lasting much longer."

Botox® is undoubtedly the most popular antiaging treatment of all time. Although, not a filler, it is an injectable. FDA approved to temporarily improve the appearance of moderate to severe frown lines between the eyebrows (glabellar lines), Botox® works by paralyzing the facial muscles.

Low doses of the purified protein are directly injected into the muscles causing the stubborn lines. The whole procedure takes about ten minutes or less. One treatment lasts about four to six months.

The first injection of Botox® Cosmetic in Southern Illinois was performed by Van Acker in his Herrin office back in the late nineties. "At that time I would inject one or two patients a week," he says. "We now have multiple appointment slots set aside daily for Botox® Cosmetic injections."

Today Southern Illinois Dermatology is a gold level Botox® Cosmetic provider, and Van Acker says he is proud to be the leader in volume of Botox® Cosmetic injected throughout the Southern Illinois region.

There's no doubt that Botox® and the ever increasing variety of injectable fillers can make a huge difference. "People want instant gratification," says Margie Nahass, PA-C, at Skin Care Center of Southern Illinois, in Mount Vernon. "Luckily they can get fast results with injectables like Botox® and Juvederm™."

Lasers

Cosmetic lasers can effectively treat wrinkles, photo aging, and skin discolorations caused by the sun and time, while also stimulating collagen production at the same time, making the skin appear younger than it did prior to treatment.

All laser resurfacing treatments essentially strip away the outer layers of damaged skin, resulting in smoother, tighter, younger-looking skin appearing on the surface, as new cells form during the healing process.

Gauto works with five different kinds of cutting-edge lasers in his practice. "Lasers can remove wrinkles and other signs of aging, like broken capillaries and spider veins," he says. "The use of LED light, when they have a special waveform, has been proven to enhance the production of collagen; the end-result being fewer wrinkles."

Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) technology, is used for photo rejuvenation of the skin and is helpful in treating sun damage, skin discoloration and improving skin texture. Laser Peel (also known as laser resurfacing), typically uses very low power. "We remove very thin layers of skin - layer by layer - 10 to 30 microns at a time," Gauto says. "The skin is given time to regenerate, before more thin layers of skin are removed in the next sitting."

Sometimes lasers can cause darkening of skin in African-Americans. "To avoid that, what we have as safety is coldness applied prior to heat," Gauto says.

According to Gauto, "The Erbium laser, along with the CO2 laser is the gold standard for laser resurfacing of the skin. It works by removing superficial and moderately deep lines and wrinkles."

Other uses of lasers include laser hair and tattoo removal and the use of lasers to relieve pain and inflammation. Gauto says he often uses cold lasers to treat inflammation caused by breast cosmetic procedures, liposuction, and tummy tucks.

Amongst laser treatments, The Pearl™ treatment is the latest resurfacing laser procedure on offer at the Skin Care Center of Southern Illinois. "Up until now, our Cutera lasers have been non-ablative tools for skin rejuvenation," Nahass says. "They do not require extensive removal or destruction of the epidermis. The Pearl™, however, is more aggressive."

Reducing wrinkles, uneven texture and solar damage while providing a healthy, pearl-like glow, the procedure treats the top layer of the skin with pulses of light in a pre-selected pattern. At the same time, the laser sends heat to the deeper layers of skin to provide longer-term benefits.

Another laser treatment is the Cutera® Titan™, which targets skin that has lost its elasticity and is loose and sagging by using a safe infrared light to heat the dermis well below the skin's surface. "With Titan, we have a wide array of different wavelengths to offer," Nahass says. "Our job is to determine what the target is - pigment (or melanin), blood (or hemoglobin), or collagen and elastin, and then choose the safest, most effective wavelength required to treat the problem."

Titan's light-based platform has successfully treated loose skin at the jaw line, under the chin and the abdomen.

Not to be left behind, Southern Illinois Dermatology provides a variety of laser treatments for both medical and cosmetic conditions, including the Smoothbeam Laser - for treatment of fine lines and wrinkles, collagen renewal, and acne; the Iridex Laser - for treatment of vascular and pigmented lesions; Xtrac Laser - for treatment of psoriasis; and the Light Sheer Diode Laser - for hair removal treatments.

Since there is such a wide variety of a laser treatments and technologies, it's always a good idea to consult with a board certified dermatologist or plastic surgeon, who is knowledgeable and specialized in laser skin care, about what the best course of treatment for your particular skin type should be.

Right here in Southern Illinois

No longer do you have to be in a metropolitan city to get access to the latest in cosmetic dermatology. "People are more willing to undergo Botox®, hair removals, fillers, you name it, right here in Southern Illinois," Nahass says. "They just want and deserve access to it. Technology can be expensive, but we're not priced out of the market."

Nahass, enjoys telling this story. A patient of hers smoked regularly and went to tanning beds. "I told her I cannot in good conscience take your money and do this laser procedure on you, since you smoke and go to tanning beds - two behaviors that age you by causing photo damage."

The lady left and then came back to Nahass eight months later for the same procedure. She had stopped smoking and stopped going to tanning beds.

Years ago people wouldn't tell you if they colored their hair. "Today we are a generation of people who want to share ways to look better," Nahass says. "All of us want to look fresher, younger and more natural. We want to get rid of our flaws, not just camouflage them."

Often women also get to an age when they just want to do something nice for themselves. An anti-aging treatment may be just what they need to make them feel that extra bit pampered; that extra bit special.

The common refrain Nahass hears all the time is "I just want to look as good as I feel." This is what compels people, a lot of the time, to seek ways of looking younger she says.

"Ultimately, anti-aging is all about making healthy lifestyle choices," Nahass adds. "Think about what you can change about your lifestyle that will slow down the aging process."

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