

Special report *Beauty & Health*

Fillers and facials an uplifting experience

With fillers and facials in high demand we take a look at some of the procedures on offer at Venus Medical Centre

TWENTY years ago, if you wanted to have "a little work done" to look younger or better, it meant committing to major surgery—a face lift under general anaesthesia that lifts skin from ear to nose and leaves a scar the length of your face. Things have changed. For one, an appreciation of what makes a face beautiful or youthful has evolved. And though beauty is still in the eye of the beholder, you cannot deny that a baby looks youthful. Full, rounded cheeks with smooth contours are unmistakably youthful features, and the depletion of this volume over time contributes to the ageing face. Studies have shown that people who are perceived as beautiful also have common physical traits: smooth, line-free skin and high, defined cheekbones. So it follows that the restoration of a youthful and beautiful appearance must address not only falling tissue, but also deflating tissue, by filling as well as lifting.

According to Dr Peter Prendergast, medical director of Venus Medical Beauty in Dublin and expert in minimally invasive procedures: "When we lift drooping tissues with, for example, a thread lift, we can improve

jowls and definition, but it can be a bit two-dimensional. By combining this lifting with fillers, to plump cheeks or improve mid-face volume, the overall result is much more pleasing." Restoring facial volume can also improve ageing lines. "If you think of the face like a balloon, when it deflates over time, it becomes wrinkled. By adding back volume, lines disappear and the skin becomes brighter and more radiant as it reflects light", he says. In his practice, Dr Prendergast uses a range of fillers to soften lines, define features and restore volume, as well as scarless thread lifts to lift sagging jowls, cheeks, neck and brows.

A Full-Filling Experience!

After Botox, fillers are one of the most in-demand non-surgical cosmetic procedures that can quickly and painlessly erase lines, plump lips, soften folds and fill hollows. Agents that add volume are categorised as fillers or stimulators. The most widely used fillers are made of non-permanent hyaluronic acid, a clear soft gel substance that is abundant in human tissue and provides support for cells. Despite the huge range of hyaluronic acid fillers available for filling, it is not so much the choice of product that determines the result, but the



Reading between the lines: the before and after effect of cosmetic fillers and uplifts

experience, skill and artistry of the doctor injecting it.

"HA fillers differ in how they are chemically cross-linked, and how they are presented, but the choice of filler is based mostly on the gel particle size or viscosity of the gel. Thicker gels are injected more deeply to soften deep folds or sculpt cheekbones, whereas fine lines such as those around the mouth require less viscous gels, otherwise they will be lumpy", explains Dr Prendergast of Venus Medical Beauty.

Depending on how much and how deep the hyaluronic acid filler has been injected, they can last 4-8 months. Radiesse (calcium hydroxylapatite), is a slightly longer lasting filler used for facial contouring and deep folds. "Radiesse is excellent for improving definition of

cheekbones, a very flattering feature, and gives beautiful results when used in combination with a thread lift to lift the jowls. The gel fills the cheeks instantly, while the calcium hydroxyapatite acts as a scaffolding through which surrounding collagen grows, giving results that last about a year," adds Dr Prendergast.

Stimulators

Stimulators, such as Sculptra (poly-L-lactic acid) work in a different way. Instead of providing an instant filling effect, they stimulate tissue and collagen, increasing volume gradually over time. Ideal for restoring generalised volume loss in the cheeks, under eyes and in the temple area, Sculptra requires a course of treatments—usually three—at intervals of one month. After injections, the filling effect

becomes noticeable about a month after treatment and improves over time. Results can last 2-3 years.

Scarless Thread Lifting

You've braved the needle with fillers and reaped the rewards: now you have cheekbones, the folds from your nose to mouth are much softer and the lines radiating from your mouth are almost completely gone! So what next? You lift the jowls back with your fingers—but you don't want surgery; not yet anyway! What if there was a way to lift sagging tissue without surgery, and without the inconvenience of stitches, bruising, swelling and the stares that say, "She's had something done"? Well, as luck would have it, there is! Recently introduced to Ireland by Dr Prendergast of Venus Medical Beauty, the Serdev scarless thread lift

techniques offer a minimally invasive means of lifting sagging tissues of the face and neck under local anaesthesia. Dr Prendergast says these new thread lifts do not replace surgery, but are a viable option for those seeking a moderate lift and refreshed look and who want no downtime. "It is impossible to reproduce surgical results through a few tiny punctures, but the Serdev thread lift relies on surgical principles, by lifting moveable but strong tissues and anchoring them to stable structures such as bone or periosteum, and for this reason I believe it is superior to other thread lifts."

"The Serdev lift improves facial proportions and can lift the eyes, cheeks, jowls, and neck without the need even for stitches. "Most patients are very happy with the results. I perform this under local anaesthesia so it is painless. Of course a consultation is important before the procedure as not everyone is suitable and some will obtain better results than others. If skin is very lax, I often combine the thread lift with Titan skin tightening using infrared light", he adds.

For more information on fillers and thread lifts, contact Venus Medical Beauty on (01) 2962747, Heritage House, Dundrum Office Park, Dundrum, Dublin 14.