

HEALTH+ DERMAL FILLERS

Refreshing and enhancing your look without surgery

BY MELANIE BRETZ

Dermal fillers are increasingly becoming the go-to non-surgical option for enhancing definition in the face and taming those pesky signs of aging like shrinking lips and cheeks, "smile lines," and vertical creases between the eyebrows.

"It's not about trying to look like you're 20 years old," says aesthetics nurse Melissa Duran, a registered nurse and nurse manager of REVITALessence Medical Spa & Laser Centers in Monterey and Salinas. "It's about looking rested, healthy and as vibrant and youthful as you feel."

Monterey plastic surgeon Dr. David Morwood shares medical director duties at REVITALessence in Monterey with Dr. Jeremy Silk and Dr. Matthew Romans of Salinas Valley Plastic Surgery. The latter two physicians are co-medical directors at the Salinas medical spa.

"As we mature, we tend to lose fat in the face and hands and put it on in the trunk and sometimes in the neck," says Dr. Morwood. "Gravity pulls down the soft tissue of the face, creating grooves, folds, lines and wrinkles. I often hear people say things like, 'In just the past two years I feel like I've turned from plum to prune or grape to raisin.' It's nature's unfunny practical joke."

According to local experts, dermal fillers have gained popularity over the past 10 years with both men and women. The FDA-approved injectable fillers come in a variety of forms and thicknesses to address different issues and areas of the face.

Treatments with dermal fillers are primarily cosmetic, elective and not covered by insurance. Patients have a choice of a consult and/or treatment with a board-certified plastic surgeon or an experienced, licensed registered nurse injector.

"Consultation is so important," says Duran. "Patients express their goals and reasons for wanting treatment. For example, wanting to look rested, healthy and have fewer lines is common. We come to agreement of what they want and what is realistic."

"There are two main categories of ways to restore volume in the face," says Dr. Morwood. "One is with fillers. Some fillers are more like oil and others are thicker and heavier. The second is a calcium hydroxyapatite-based injectable that stimulates the body's production of collagen."

Common issues treated with injectable dermal fillers include the area between the eyelid and cheek to minimize the bagginess and smooth out the eyelid junction; making the chin or cheek bones more prominent; softening smile lines and lines that appear on and around the lips; creating more volume in the lips; filling in the area between the hairline and eyebrows; and softening other lines on



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the face. These injectables can also be used to fill in a depression where skin cancer was removed, for example.

We've all heard, and perhaps seen, the tell-tale signs of the traditional face lift, which can give the face a flat appearance and require several days or weeks of recovery time. On the other hand, dermal fillers can lend the face more definition and involve very little to no recovery time.

"One of the benefits is that many of these procedures are 'lunch time' treatments with no down time," says Dr. Morwood. "And any evidence there is of the procedure can typically be masked with a little make-up."

"Depending on the filler, the results can generally last eight months to two years," says Duran.

To ease any discomfort, patients have the option of numbing with a topical cream and ice, nitrous oxide or a local anesthetic that's injected with a needle and syringe—similar to what's used by dentists when filling a cavity.

"We are committed to safety and high quality, as well as building good will in our communities," says Dr. Morwood. "We don't want to give patients a treatment that's not the right option for them."

"Dermal fillers have historically been more popular with women, but men are increasingly coming in for things like a stronger-looking chin, more prominent cheek bones or softening the vertical lines between the eyebrows," Duran says. "They want to look more rested and put together."

There's also a growing trend among women in their 20s and 30s to want fuller lips. "Some lips are naturally asymmetrical and we use fillers to make them more balanced," says Duran. "To look natural, the bottom lip should have double the volume of the top lip."

Not all treatments are done in a single session. "We may add filler to an area and have the patient come back in a month," says Duran. "It varies by what you're having done." ■

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Skin Care Essentials for Men and Women

Keeping the Largest Organ in the Body Looking Young and Healthy

By David T. Morwood, M.D., Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeon, Co-Medical Director, Revitalessence Medical Spa and Laser Center



Everyone wants to look their best. It is part of human nature. It’s built inside our DNA. Part of looking your best is keeping your skin — the largest organ in the body — looking fresh, healthy, smooth and vibrant.

For anyone who lives and works in California, keeping your skin looking fresh and healthy can be a challenge. Many of us live in California because of the weather and proximity to the ocean. Although being outdoors and getting fresh air, sun and wind feels good, the sun can play havoc with our skin, and years of exposure to an ocean breeze or even a dry wind with time can damage the delicate layers of our skin — the epidermis and dermis.

There are two basic layers in the skin. The outer layer is called the epidermis, which is superficial and is what we see when we look at someone’s face. The deeper, thicker dermis, contains the blood supply for the skin, collagen, the basic protein building block in our bodies. The dermis also contains compounds such as

elastin, which gives the skin resilience, and hyaluronic acids, which can help keep the skin moisturized.

Even though the warm rays of the sun feel good on our face, the UV rays can actually damage the all-important collagen layer in the dermis and can cause the very superficial keratin layer in the epidermis to become heavy and thick, which can create a dull, oftentimes leathery appearance.

Fortunately, there are a few key essential steps to protecting your skin from the elements such as sun and wind exposure.

I try to teach my patients, along with my aesthetician, that proper skin care involves two key elements, and they are very similar to dental care and keeping your teeth healthy and looking good. In the same way you will want to see your dental hygienist and dentist to get checkups and treatment, most of the important maintenance work you do yourself at home once or twice a day, including flossing and brushing.

Seeing a licensed skilled aesthetician for facials, dermal stimulation treatments,

deep-cleaning sessions, and light exfoliation can be a vital and enjoyable part of your skin care routine. And by the same token, adding a home-care regimen with medical-grade skin care products can be a simple, effective way to not only minimize damage from the outside elements, but to help to actually reverse some sun damage.

Here are six simple tips to keeping your skin looking and feeling its best:

1. Avoid direct sun. For those people who exercise outdoors or who must work outdoors, a large-brim hat is essential as well as protective clothing. A high quality, medical-grade sunblock, preferably with a moisturizer, goes a long way to protecting your skin from those harmful UV rays. Of course, another benefit of avoiding direct sun to keep your skin looking good is a lower incidence of skin cancers as well.

2. Proper cleansing. At least once a day your skin should be properly washed and cleansed. Your aesthetician can instruct you in proper cleansing. We are all exposed to pollutants, toxins, dust and grime during

our daily lives. Makeup should be removed before sleeping for the night to allow the skin to properly breathe and renew itself. Some people have oily skin, some people have dry, and some people have patches of both. Your aesthetician can custom-design a program of proper cleansing for you.

3. Exfoliation. This is the process whereby the very superficial keratin layer is thinned to a more desirable thickness and the very superficial skin cells in the epidermis that have been damaged by the sun and wind are shed. The very superficial keratin layer of the epidermis is not living; it is like hair and nails. When the keratin layer thickens, the skin can lose its sheen and glow. As the skin undergoes exfoliation, new baby cells are encouraged to replicate and grow and replace the cells that are shed.

4. Regeneration. This is one of the most important steps in your home-care regimen. There are ways to encourage and stimulate the germinal matrix, the layer in the dermis where new baby cells are born and manufactured and replicate. Since they are new cells, they have not yet been exposed to the sun and other harmful elements. There is a normal turnover of cells that occurs in everyone, and this turnover cycle tends to slow down as we mature.

Medical-grade skin care products encourage regeneration and new cell formation and at times can stimulate and heighten this process. Please keep in mind it takes a minimum of 30 to 45 days for a new baby cell to get closer to the surface where it can be seen. For the person who has just begun skin care, patience is necessary to continue with your regimen to allow for multiple cycles of cell regeneration and allowing the cells to come closer to the surface.

5. Effective moisturization. Healthy skin is hydrated and moisturized. As the skin exfoliates and the keratin layer becomes thinner, the layers of the skin are susceptible to becoming dry. Dry crepey-appearing skin can oftentimes be confused with permanently wrinkled skin. With proper moisturization and hydration, your



skin can once again become more like a grape instead of a raisin. You will want to use a product that hydrates and moisturizes your skin while serving as an additional barrier to sun, wind and other harsh elements.

6. Avoid smoking. Because skin is a living organ comprised of cells, it needs blood supply. Blood must be able to flow

in to deliver oxygen and the necessary nutrients and it also must flow out to carry away carbon dioxide and toxins and waste products. That blood supply is dependent upon microvasculature below and within the dermis. Cigarette smoke, either prima or secondhand smoke, can constrict and choke those all-important blood vessels that are vital for health of the skin. Most people have heard of antioxidants that are found in super foods such as blueberries, pomegranates and Acai berries. Those antioxidants help the microvascular to heal and can boost the immune system.

Cigarette smoke does the opposite. On puff of a cigarette contains thousands of oxidants, which is like a chemical that encourages blood vessels to become clogged, much like a rusty pipe, resulting the vital organs such as the skin, the liver and the kidneys and the heart to become choked.

These are key steps you can take yourself at home, and these need not be complicated or expensive. I advise an evaluation by your aesthetician, plastic surgeon or dermatologist to have a custom designed skin care program for you and your skin.

Of course, what we put in our bodies is just as important or more important than what we apply topically to our skin. Proper diet and nutrition with adequate fresh vegetables, fruits, and other produce can provide the vitamins and minerals all of our vital organs need for proper metabolism, as well as adequate water intake to keep the entire body hydrated, and a regular exercise program to help sweat out physical as well as emotional toxins to keep our general health optimum.

For further information on medical-grade skin care products, a consultation with an aesthetician, a nurse injector, or with Dr. David Morwood, a board certified plastic surgeon, call or email the Revitalessence medical spa, or Dr. Morwood’s office at (831) 646-8661. [ee](#)