

HEALTHY

Lifestyles

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WHAT'S NEW IN PLASTIC SURGERY?

You may not believe your eyes.

By ELAINE HESSER

PLASTIC SURGERY is an old medical practice. The first recorded cases were from before the time of Christ, mainly in India. By the late 1700s and early 1800s, skin grafts, operations to repair cleft palates and rhinoplasty (procedures to repair or improve the appearance of the patient's nose) were documented in Europe and the United States.

The specialty grew with the introduction of effective anesthesia and antibiotics, and World Wars I and II increased the need for ways to repair facial and other injuries caused mainly by burns and bullets.

By the beginning of the 20th century, cosmetic surgery was growing up alongside surgeries meant to repair injuries and malformations. Doctors were beginning to look at eye surgeries that would make someone look younger, procedures to fix protruding ears, and eliminate wrinkles. There was a great deal of quackery and snake oil, but also sincere efforts at learning that included physicians trying techniques on themselves.

Cosmetic surgery has endured a great deal of skepticism, and as recently as January 2018 became the topic of a nasty, if brief, feud between

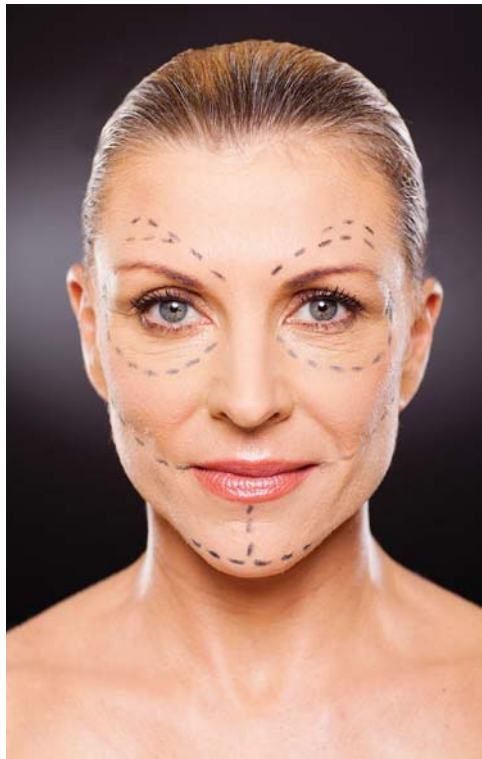
Jane Fonda — who's openly discussed her surgeries — and NBC news host Megyn Kelly, who had the temerity to ask about them during an interview.

However, respected local plastic surgeons Dr. David Morwood and Dr. Douglas Sunde, who have practices just a few blocks apart in Monterey, pointed out that cosmetic surgery can be life-changing — and not just for those who need to have a repair after an injury or cancer surgery.

"Everyone wants to look their best," said Morwood. "It's in our DNA. We're living longer, working longer and still want relationships." He described cosmetic surgery as a way to

take care of ourselves and feel better — just like eating right and working out. And it's no longer the sole provenance of the rich and famous.

"Many people in the middle class have plastic surgery," he said.



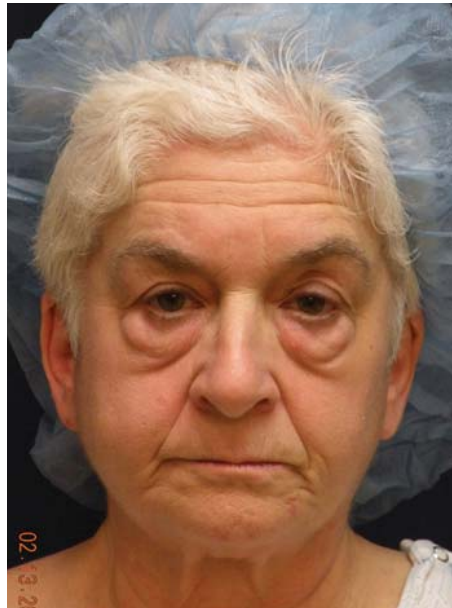
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Sunde explained that as people age, their skeletons get smaller and they lose fat — but often in all the wrong places. Just as you might notice a loss of height as you age, your skull is also shrinking and your face is losing fat, which makes the skin sag.

“In France they say you can either have a great body or great face,” he said, meaning that heavier people tend to look younger because they have more fat in their faces.

Take heart, though. With a facelift, it’s not an either/or situation. That’s why, “Facelifts are fun,” said Sunde.

But he’s not talking about the facelifts of the 1960s and 1970s, when long incisions were made, excess skin was removed, and the remaining skin was pulled taut and sewed together before it could spring back.



Today’s plastic surgery procedures can yield subtle or dramatic changes.

Morwood noted that incisions were often 12 to 18 inches long.

“One-third of the back of the head had to be shaved,” he added. “The patient had to spend one or two nights in the hospital, and then was in bed as long as two weeks.”

Now, Morwood and Sunde use a radically different approach. Just as gall bladder and knee surgeries can be done with much fewer, smaller incisions, so can facelifts. Morwood said not only are the new techniques less traumatic, they’re great for patients who can choose just to have the neck and jowls done, for example.

The results don’t look as severe as some you may recall (Joan Rivers, Phyllis Diller). “People want to look more like themselves, but rested, vibrant and rejuvenated, like they’ve been on vacation or they’re in love,” said Morwood.



And what Morwood called an “unfunny practical joke” — the fact that as people age, they lose fat in the face and it tends to gather in the torso — can also be reversed, at least a little. He and Sunde use



David Morwood



Douglas Sunde

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the unappetizing-sounding fat graft to remove some of what's been added to the patient's trunk, centrifuge it to concentrate the fat, keep it sterile and then inject it into the cheeks, facial folds and other places where it will help improve the patient's appearance.

You may have heard of fillers, which are manufactured substances used in much the same way. Morwood referred to getting those injections as a "lunchtime treatment." They last anywhere from six months to a year. Sunde said the newer ones, which contain a chemical called hyaluronic acid, are an improvement over older ones made of collagen.

"About 2 percent of the people who used [the collagen] were allergic to it," Sunde said, necessitating weeks of testing in advance to make sure there were no reactions.

While fat grafts take a bit a longer and are more involved because of the liposuction required, Sunde said using fat as a filler is different "because it's your Douglas Sunde own tissue. It's like a skin graft. If it works at the outset, it lasts forever." And, he added, it's rare that the procedure doesn't work. "There are really good studies that show about two-thirds of the fat grafted in lives forever, so we over-inject people — just a little."

Sunde pointed out several other uses for fat grafts — after breast reconstruction, for example, they can fill in small dimples or



"Lunchtime treatments" using injectibles are available

indentations. They can also make the skin look more normal after radiation treatments, which can leave it looking hard, thick or even woody. He especially likes using them in patients' hands, to make them look younger.

As for some of the other claims out there, Sunde warned against anything advertised with stem cells.

"I can't wait until they can do all the things people think they're going to do, but we're not there yet." He envisions a day when people can get cartilage grown

in a lab from their stem cells and have it injected into a joint to resurface it, for example. "But nobody can do that yet," he said. The same is true of "stem cell facelifts," which he said offer no proven advantages.

Morwood described the true aim of legitimate cosmetic surgery: "By using a foundation in both art and science and by approaching facial rejuvenation with dedication to surgical excellence, we aim to have more people looking their best and then feeling their best."