



# Facing Alternatives

## NEW TREATMENTS HELP WOMEN LOOK YOUNGER WITHOUT SURGERY

BY MARTA I. RENDON, M.D.

**N**ew procedures that eliminate wrinkles and plump the skin are giving many women what they've been dreaming of for years: a younger appearance without the pain and expense of surgery. Even better, modern facial rejuvenation techniques produce virtually instantaneous results, require no time off for recovery and are less expensive than a facelift. Here are a few of the latest innovations.

### SCULPTRA

Sculptra is a synthetic polymer that was developed to replace facial fat loss in patients with HIV, and is now being used off-label for cosmetic purposes. Because it is derived from natural components, Sculptra is biocompatible and biodegradable, and can be used safely to fill large areas, as well as smaller lines and creases. When injected in tiny amounts just under the skin, Sculptra works by stimulating the growth of the patient's natural collagen, gradually increasing skin thickness. Visible results appear in two to three weeks, and the effects last a minimum of two years. Many believe that Sculptra will be the biggest breakthrough for defying the signs of aging since Botox.

### HYALURONIC ACID-BASED PRODUCTS

Hyaluronic acid is another substance that keeps skin looking smooth and supple by adding support to tissues. Its role is to attract water to hydrate the skin, thereby providing volume and fullness. Like collagen, hyaluronic acid is lost as we age. Hyaluronic acid-based fillers are used to smooth unwanted lines and wrinkles. Best of all, the results can actually delay the aging process.

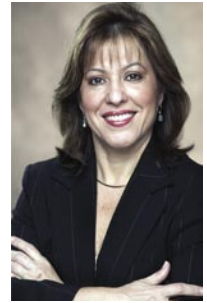
### BOTOX COSMETIC

Botox Cosmetic was the first treatment to receive FDA approval for the temporary reduction of moderate-to-severe frown lines. A purified protein produced by the clostridium botulinum bacterium, Botox injected in small doses improves the appearance of wrinkles by weakening the muscles that form them. For this reason, it works best on lines resulting from the contraction of a muscle under the skin while making facial expressions. Because Botox decreases the ability to frown or squint, it eliminates wrinkly expressions, prevents lines from deepening and may prevent new wrinkles from forming. Results become apparent in a few days and can last up to four months. It is excellent for reducing wrinkles around the eyes and forehead.

### A "MINI-FACELIFT"

The latest trend is to use more than one of the above treatments to maximize results. For example, Botox injected in the upper portion of the face to erase frown lines and relax the brow, and a hyaluronic acid-based product or Sculptra treatment is given on the lower half of the face to smooth the skin and add volume to the face. The results can be so dramatic that they are often compared to a mini-facelift. Research has also shown that using more than one product in combination causes the effect of all products to last longer.

While these procedures are considered temporary, they are less expensive and less risky than facelifts, and are perfect for busy people who cannot take time off from work or life to recover. That's why they are very popular for both women and men from their 30s through their 60s who want to look younger. **1**



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