

"Anti-Aging: Botox and Restylane" by Dr. Matta

Welcome to my first article on anti-aging medicine. While none of us can stop the aging process, the goal is to age as gracefully as possible with the best quality of life and lowest risk of disease. Mental and physical health are both important. Studies have shown that when somebody physically looks better, their mental health is better. When I was younger (in my twenties) I never understood the obsession people had about looking younger. As I've matured (my polite way of saying "aged"), I realize that it's not a lot of fun to look in the mirror or see a picture of yourself and the person looking back at you looks 20 years older than you feel inside.

The purpose of this series of articles is to review the cosmetic side of aging and discuss safe and effective techniques to improve the signs of aging; as well as discuss some of the lifestyle changes you can make to ensure the best possible health you can have as you age to reduce your chance of chronic disease and long term morbidity (our way of saying sick or unwell).

This first article will discuss the two most common medical cosmetic procedures that you hear about in the mainstream: Botox Cosmetic and Restylane. The most common question I hear is: What's the difference between them? I'm going to answer that question with a fairly detailed explanation. The most common cosmetic concerns that both men and women come into my office to discuss are:

- Wrinkles and Folds
- Skin Texture, Color and Pore Size
- Fat & Cellulite
- Hair Removal
- Broken blood vessels and varicose veins

Today's discussion will be limited to wrinkles and folds. As we age, many things occur; among them we develop two different kinds of wrinkles/folds, dynamic and static. Dynamic wrinkles occur when one uses their facial muscles in expression, so the wrinkles that develop above the eyes when you frown are dynamic frown lines (the famous "number 11" lines). If those lines are there all the time because of long term frowning or genetics, then they are static frown lines. So static lines are there all the time and dynamic lines only come out when you express yourself.

Botox Cosmetic is most useful for dynamic wrinkles. It works to reduce the muscle action that is creating the line. Botox Cosmetic has been around for many years and is a purified protein that acts locally on the muscle into which it is injected. It takes about 15 minutes for a treatment and starts to work in 4-10 days. Full results typically last 3-4 months at the beginning and last longer once you have been doing the treatment for a while. Patients who have been with me for years now come in for Botox Cosmetic once or twice a year due to the long term benefit they get. The

two most common areas treated are the glabella (frown lines that look like the number 11) and crow's feet (radial lines coming out from the side of the eyes). Other areas include horizontal lines on the forehead, bunny lines on the nose, smoker's lines on the upper lip, downward lip lines and chin dimple lines.

We all have our own philosophy on aging and cosmetic procedures. I prefer a natural appearance as opposed to trying to look younger. I know it's not popular to tell somebody they look great....for their age. It's the "for their age" part that drives them crazy, but it's important to look good for YOUR age and not try to look twenty when you're 50. When one tries too hard to look young they just look like they've been "done". My goal is that people tell you, "You look great" and not know why you look so good; it drives them crazy and makes you smile. So if you're 50 try to be a "good" 50 and not look 20.

The most common area treated in the world with Botox Cosmetic is the glabella. It helps reduce or eliminate the vertical lines between the eyes that one gets with squinting in the sun, heavy thought, frowning or just plain genetics. One of the things that's great about Botox Cosmetic treatment in the frown lines is that it allows the frontal muscle to act unopposed (like weakening one side in a tug-of-war) and raise the eyebrow (like a non-surgical brow lift). If you put too much Botox Cosmetic into the frontal muscle, in an effort to reduce the horizontal forehead lines, you won't get as much lift of the eyebrow. Most patients prefer the brow lift over the elimination of the horizontal frontal lines. Unfortunately, you can't have it both ways, you can't eliminate the horizontal lines and get a lift at the same time. Some patients will choose to soften deep horizontal lines over getting a brow lift. The best choice is determined during consultation with your cosmetic doctor. Often I will treat the glabella first, wait two weeks and decide if the patient still wants the horizontal lines treated or if they prefer the brow lift.

The crows feet (radial lines around the eyes especially when you smile) can also be very aging. A little bit of Botox Cosmetic into the orbicularis muscle (the circular muscle around the eye that helps you squint hard) reduces them significantly. Too much treatment in the crows feet area can cause a little bit of puffiness below the eye as well as reduce the naturalness of the smile.

Other less common areas treated include:

- The chin to reduce the dimpling effect.
- Upper lip to reduce smoker's lines. Too much treatment can make mouth movement feel awkward.
- The downward sloping corners of the mouth. This treatment works well to either raise the corners of the mouth that slope as we age or help prevent it from getting worse. It's a subtle response but pleasing nonetheless. Improper placement can cause asymmetry of the lip, so you want to make sure your injector is experienced.

- The bunny lines on the nose that become noticeable when you “scunch” your face.
- The platysma muscle. This muscle can cause the vertical lines down the neck from the corners of the jaw to the collar bone called platysmal bands. A little Botox Cosmetic into this muscle works beautifully to reduce these bands but again, you want to avoid excessive treatment.

In general, Botox Cosmetic is a very safe treatment with minimal side effects. Most negative issues about Botox Cosmetic arise from using too much or an inexperienced injector. Some people have this misconception about Botox Cosmetic that it will give you a “frozen” look or I still hear patients ask me if it is a poison. Botox Cosmetic is a purified protein that reduces contraction of the muscles into which it was injected. The safety profile of Botox is greater than many standard over the counter medications that you may use on a daily basis. It would take 70-100 times the standard dose to have any significant risk to one’s health. A few months ago the media suggested that studies showed Botox Cosmetic migrates to the brain. This was completely inaccurate. The study was not done using Botox Cosmetic. As well there was a report years ago of 4 people who needed hospitalization for 4 months after “Botox” treatment. Again, it was completely inaccurate. The patients were not treated with Botox Cosmetic, instead it was a research-grade Botulinum toxin. This once again highlights the importance of seeing an experienced, respected injector. I, and most injectors nowadays, prefer to give the patient a natural, relaxed appearance as opposed to the “frozen” look that you see in the movies. Almost all of my patients will comment that people say they look good, or more rested but not know why; and of course the patient doesn’t give a way their secret. Remember, good cosmetic work shouldn’t show... you should just look good and keep people guessing.

Even though most of my discussion was about Botox Cosmetic with the specific anti-wrinkle effects, most patients aren’t aware that Botox was originally used for medical purposes and still is. In medicine medications are approved for specific “indications”. When a medication is used for a different indication, or something it is not “officially” approved for, it is called off label. Botox is used for many indicated and off label uses. Botox is officially indicated for cervical dystonia, hyperhidrosis, blepharospasm and....It is used off label for many other conditions including, but not limited to, migraines and neck and back pain from muscle spasm. The medical uses of Botox are beyond the purpose of this article but you can always speak with your doctor about them and we will probably discuss them in more detail in future articles.

Written by Dr. Matta