

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. I will also discuss some of the lifestyle changes you can make to ensure the best possible health you can have as you age. This can 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/forehead 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 "scrunch" 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 spasticity disorders. 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.

“Since its approval, over a million people have been treated with BOTOX® Cosmetic. In its entire history, there has never been a single reported death where a causal link to BOTOX® Cosmetic was established,” said Dr. Sef Kurtstjens, Allergan’s Chief Medical Officer. “In a recent interview, a representative of Public Citizen appeared to suggest that there was a reported fatality associated with BOTOX® Cosmetic. A medical review of this actual case demonstrates that the patient passed away in the winter of 2004 from complications associated with staphylococcus pneumonia, not from a BOTOX® Cosmetic treatment the patient received 7 weeks earlier.

Now we come to Restylane. The most common question I am asked is, “what’s the difference between Restylane and Botox Cosmetic?” Well, Restylane is filler while Botox Cosmetic is a muscle relaxant. Restylane is used to fill wrinkles and folds, create sensual lips, improve skin hydration and lift sagging/deflating cheeks. The closest thing that people can relate it to is the olden days of collagen usage. The problem with collagen was that it caused a lot of allergic reactions since it was animal based. The great

thing about Restylane is that it is Non-Animal, Stabilized Hyaluronic Acid (NASHA). Hyaluronic acid is a naturally occurring substance in the body whose job is to hold water and plump things up a bit. It provides lubrication/ fullness and contributes to some of the youthful features that you see in younger skin. Unfortunately, as always happens, as we age we lose hyaluronic acid so things dry out and deflate. Thankfully, we can now restore that fullness to what you used to have when you were younger. Remember, it's all about restoring what you used to have and giving you a natural youthful look.

In the early days, Restylane was mainly used for nasolabial folds (the smile lines from the nose to the corner of the mouth) and lip augmentation. Over the years, we have come to see the versatility of the filler and added many other treatments. The most common procedure that I perform is a cheek lift. Most patients, men and women alike, don't realize that one of the most aging features is a loss of cheek volume with a corresponding drop of the front and side aspect of the face. In fact, it's this drop that contributes to the nasolabial fold looking so prominent. With Restylane, we can sculpt a sexy high model-like cheekbone, fill in a face that has sunken in from weight loss, improve thin "party hat lines", augment a dropping chin, reduce smoker's lines, improve jowls and so much more. In fact, the limits are endless in terms of what you can do. With Restylane you are able to sculpt and create the specific look that you want (within reason of course).

Side effects are usually limited to bruising and swelling but there are other potential side effects that you will want to discuss with your doctor. The procedure usually takes around 30-60 minutes and the results are seen right away with continued improvement over the first few weeks. Restylane usually lasts 6-12 months although I've had patients who have had over 2 years of benefit and patients in which it started to wear off in 4 months or so. The more you do, the longer it tends to last.

One of the common questions I am asked is how Restylane compares to the permanent fillers. There are three reasons I prefer Restylane, a non-permanent filler, to the permanent fillers. First, some people have little channels under their skin; so when you inject the Restylane, it can go into one of these channels and end up not in the exact location you injected it. With Restylane, one can massage it out, or worst case scenario, it will break down in 6 months or more. With the permanent fillers, you are potentially left with a permanent line that you never had before. Thankfully this has never happened to me before, but it is always a possibility. Second, permanent fillers are more inflammatory and have a higher chance of causing tissue reactions and possible granulomas (hard tender lumps in the area injected). Once again, I have never seen this happen with Restylane. The last reason is that I like to do age-appropriate treatment. In other words, the way that I treat the patient today may be very different than the way I treat them in 5 years. We all age, our faces change, our anatomy and structure changes and one must alter their treatment based on the way the face looks at that time.

In a nutshell, cosmetic treatments nowadays can be very natural looking and indeed I think they should be. People should not be able to tell that you've had something "done"; instead they should just comment on how good you look. Botox can help reduce your

dynamic wrinkles and Restylane can reduce small static wrinkles, fill deeper folds, raise and restore your cheeks and many other things. The first step you would want to take is to contact an experienced injector who can assess your patient and tailor a customized treatment for your needs. It is important that they understand your philosophy to aging and cosmetic treatments as well as understanding your budget and possible limitations.

I hope that this article has been helpful and I hope you will enjoy future articles.

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