



WRINKLE ERASERS

By James H. Schmidt, MD, FACS

Have you looked in the mirror and seen a new wrinkle and wondered where did that come from? Or is an old wrinkle getting deeper and more noticeable? Can anything be done to improve those lines? The answer is yes. As we go through the aging process, the collagen and elastin fibers in the skin begin to weaken. Lines become deeper and more noticeable, we lose volume in the face and skin begins to sag. This varies from person to person and depends upon heredity and how we care for our skin. Factors such as ultraviolet light, smoking, malnutrition and disease may accelerate this process. The good news is that today we have more ways to treat wrinkles than ever before. The best treatment for you will depend upon the cause, location and extent of the wrinkling.

The best place to start is by discussing with your plastic surgeon what course of action is best for you. Some of the more common treatments include:

Neuromuscular blockers - FDA approved Botox Cosmetic® and Dysport effectively treat frown lines between the eyebrows, the lines on the sides of the eyes (crow's feet), and forehead lines. Both products weaken the muscles that pull in the skin creating the lines. This easy treatment consists of small injections in the affected areas generally lasts about three months.

Hyaluronic Acid fillers (HA's) - These fillers include Restylane, Juvederm, and Perlane among others. HA is a naturally occurring protein in our skin. Local anesthesia numbs the area of treatment and the HA is injected under individual lines to fill in the wrinkles. In most people, HA's last about six to nine months.

Sculptra - Sculptra is used to fill in volume loss. Unlike the fillers described above, Sculptra is injected in the deeper tissues to add volume and stimulate collagen formation. It lasts about two years.

Fat - Using a local anesthetic, fat cells are removed from one part of our body and are injected under wrinkles or into areas

that need more volume. The grafted fat cells provide a longer term correction and can last more than two years.

Lasers - Lasers correct wrinkles, discoloration and improve the texture of your skin. There are many different types of lasers. The Fraxel laser, used for mild treatments, is an in-office treatment using a topical anesthetic. There is a mild skin peeling and minimal to no down time. Typically a series of several treatments are recommended. For deeper lines, the more aggressive CO₂ laser may be needed. Only one treatment is required; however, there is a healing period. Newer lasers utilize the fractional technologies which allow the skin to heal much faster than the older techniques.

It is important to practice good skin care and use appropriate sun protection products. Plastic surgeons who offer additional "medical spa" services at their practice with a licensed aesthetician and a physician assistant on staff are providing their patients with total care for you to look your best. These "medical spa" services may include clinical skin care, microdermabrasion, permanent tattooing for eyebrows, lips, eyeliner, and areola, and the Fraxel and IPL lasers for hair removal, spider veins and improving skin texture.

Medical spa treatments mainly address the skin and its quality. If the underlying tissues are losing support and you're noticing the "bags and sags", a surgical procedure may be required to reposition and support the loose tissue. The good news is that many of the present techniques are less invasive and have a shorter recovery than in the past. Discussing the options with your plastic surgeon can provide the best solutions for you. [S](#)

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