

New is always better....isn't it?

Everyone is investing in noninvasive cosmetic surgery procedures - young, old, male, and female. But if you want to spend your hard-earned dollars to improve your appearance, where do you start? In the past, you would shyly approach a plastic surgeon or dermatologist, share your dilemma, and hope for a solution.

Now, you may watch an anti-aging cosmetic procedure on the Today show, decide, "That's for me," and seek out the miracle worker who did it. The problem with TV shows is that they're committed to increasing viewers, not to protecting your health. That makes them a great source of entertainment but a poor source of medical referrals, especially when they inspire you to try out procedures that are untested and unapproved.

We at [The Institute of Aesthetic Surgery](#) remain on the cutting edge in innovation, but are judicious in the technology we invest in for our patients. In a savvy *Allure* article, Joan Kron states, "...the most dangerous word in plastic surgery may be 'new.'" To illustrate this point, *Allure* collected several cosmetic surgery procedures that may be overrated. They are not all new; they include procedures that are untested, outdated, painful, risky, or ineffective. Some of these procedures may work for you now, and some may be future miracle workers, but consider the pluses and minuses.

- **The Vampire Face Lift**

This is not really a face lift, it's not FDA-approved for facial use, and there are no independent studies proving its cosmetic benefits. The basic premise is that if your doctor injects your own yellow blood plasma around your eyes and mouth, the growth factors in your plasma will gradually stimulate collagen production. What's confusing is that doctors commonly inject Juvederm at the same time, a hyaluronic agent that has immediate plumping effects. So, how can you know what's causing your newly plump cheeks? Bottom line is that Juvederm is FDA-approved and clinically proven to yield results, while plasma injection is unproven and adds a hefty \$1,000 to your bill.

- **Laser Liposuction**

The basic premise is that the high heat from lasers melts your fat before it is removed from your body. In this procedure, a laser wand (the melting device) is inserted under your skin before another tube vacuums out your fat. The benefit of the heat (laser) is better skin tightening, more elasticity, and less bruising. But some plastic surgeons cite disadvantages, including the risks of a burn, large scars, tissue hardening, and prolonged pain. You may want to stick to other tested methods of liposuction until the experts reach a consensus.

- **The Stem Cell Face Lift**

Almost 10 years ago, claims started to appear, without proof, that stem cells in fat improved skin quality. Shortly thereafter, a savvy marketer called injection of your own fat to plump certain facial areas a "stem cell facelift." Sounds irresistible, but a chair of plastic surgery at the University of Texas says "the idea that fat injections can replace a traditional facelift is high on marketing and short on science." Stem cells may be the great hope of modern medicine but right now there's no FDA-approved device to separate stem cells from fat and no proof that stem cells rejuvenate the face. The jury is out.

- **Sculptra and Artefill for Lips**

Sculptra, a chemical injected into the face to stimulate collagen growth, shows good results in the temples and the cheeks. But, when it's injected into your lips it can create ugly lumps, bumps, and make your lips bigger than you ever dreamed possible. The same goes for Artefill, a mixture of Plexiglas-like beads and cow collagen. Artefill is approved for filling smile lines only. As the collagen is absorbed, the body forms scar tissue around the beads. Injected into the lips, Artefill can result in clumps and nodules that won't disappear until they are cut out. To enhance your lips, have them injected with temporary fillers such as Juvederm and Restylane.

- **Silicone Cheek Implants**

In the 90s, silicone cheek implants, anchored below the skin, were standard for filling out the cheeks. But now, you may want to consider getting injectable facial fillers instead. A New York plastic surgeon and clinical professor at Mount Sinai Medical Center says, "Cheek implants can migrate and cause infection and nerve injuries, and the aesthetic result is difficult to reverse."

- **Fat Injections for Breast Augmentation**

There are pros and cons with this procedure. Results look good and feel natural and the needles leave no scars, which are all good reasons that fat injections for breast enhancement have become increasingly popular. But there are some downsides: multiple procedures may be necessary, and the most you can get is a single cup-size enlargement.

- **Brachioplasty**

If you have just a little extra skin and good elasticity, you may qualify for the type of brachioplasty operation in which fat is extracted through an incision hidden in the armpit. But if you have major arm laxity, brachioplasty will yield a scar that runs from armpit to elbow. This is still a reasonable option, especially after major weight loss, when your arms can look like bat wings.

- **Butt Implants**

The reoperation rate for this procedure is high because the implant is placed in an area where there is no anatomical pocket, and then you sit on it. Risks include infection, wound opening, loss of feeling, and extrusion. Another alternative is getting fat injections to enhance your buttocks.

- **Laser fat reduction**

In this procedure, a red laser flashes from a machine's arms to target and drain fat deposits below your skin. When combined with diet, exercise, and supplements, you may lose some body fat, but not rolls of fat. It's hard to say if the loss is the result of the procedure or of diet and exercise. Some patients report no benefit at all after six sessions, resulting in "wallet-ectomy."

At the Institute of Aesthetic Surgery we love New Technology – when it works!

We often carry new technology and try it. However, if we don't see any benefits, we will often return it. Our criteria are that any device must fill a need at a reasonable price with reasonable expectations and results. We keep in mind as well, that non invasive devices will typically develop results which do not match surgical techniques, but often serve as an adjunct, or a stepping stone.

Attend one of our educational seminar series to learn more about the latest innovations in plastic surgery. We welcome the opportunity to share our experience and knowledge with you.