

# Your Guide to Nonsurgical Aesthetic Treatments

National Women's Health Resource Center



The information suggested in this publication is not intended as a substitute for medical advice, nor does it suggest diagnoses for individual cases. Consult your health care professional to evaluate personal medical problems.

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The National Women's Health Resource Center (NWHRC) is the leading independent not-for-profit health information source for women. NWHRC develops and distributes up-to-date and objective women's health information based on the latest advances in medical research and practice. NWHRC believes all women should have access to the most trusted and reliable health information. Information empowers women to make the best decisions to maintain and improve their health and the health of their families.



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## YOUR GUIDE TO

# Nonsurgical Aesthetic Treatments

It's no secret. Women today can reduce, prevent or even erase the signs of aging and skin damage without resorting to surgery. In fact, chances are you know someone who has had a nonsurgical aesthetic treatment, which include injections, chemical peels, microdermabrasion and laser hair removal. Thanks to new lasers, a better understanding of how skin becomes damaged (and how such damage can be “undone”) and new medications and injectables, nonsurgical aesthetic procedures are accessible to just about anyone. Wrinkles, facial lines, excess hair, broken blood vessels, large pores and acne scars all can be part of the past for many women—and men.

*According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, plastic surgeons perform about 9.5 million minimally invasive aesthetic treatments annually, while dermatologists, otolaryngologists, ophthalmologists and other medical specialists perform millions more.*

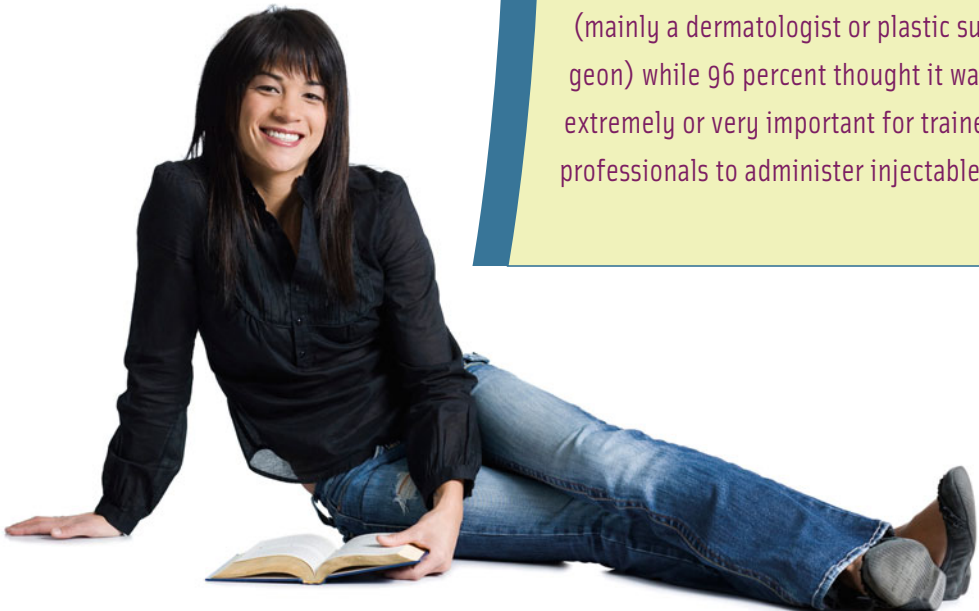


Given the increasing interest in aesthetic treatments, it is important to remember that these are medical treatments, and with all medical procedures—even cosmetic ones—consumers need to be aware of the potential risks. To reduce your risk of complications and ensure that you receive the best possible results, it is important to choose the right procedure and products, at the right time, for

you. Equally important is choosing a qualified health care professional who is trained to prescribe or administer cosmetic treatments, and who can help you make an informed decision.

Yet, with at least a dozen such procedures available in even the smallest towns, being informed about nonsurgical aesthetic treatment options can be a challenge.

**Relax. You're about to have all your questions answered.**



## What Women Are Saying about Nonsurgical Aesthetic Procedures

According to a 2006 Harris Interactive survey of 800 American women aged 35 to 69, women report wanting to look an average of 13 years younger. The survey also found that 78 percent of women expect aesthetic procedures to leave them with a natural-looking, refreshed appearance, while 75 percent of women reported being concerned about the expense of such treatments, and 65 percent were concerned that the treatments don't last long enough. In addition, the survey found that 91 percent of those surveyed said they would go to a health professional for information about the treatments (mainly a dermatologist or plastic surgeon) while 96 percent thought it was extremely or very important for trained professionals to administer injectables.

# Something for Everyone

As recently as 10 years ago, non-surgical aesthetic treatments primarily meant facials. Today, aesthetic-specialty physicians, such as plastic surgeons, dermatologists and other medical specialists, perform millions of nonsurgical aesthetic treatments every year. In fact, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), the number of nonsurgical aesthetic treatments increased 84 percent between 2002 and 2006—264 percent just for that headline-grabbing treatment: Botox Cosmetic.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the growing popularity of these procedures, be sure to do your homework if you're considering one of these treatments. Even something as simple as a chemical peel carries potential risks, particularly when performed by

someone who is not properly trained in the procedure. In fact, a 2001 survey of 2,500 members of the American Society of Dermatologic Surgeons (ASDS) found that 45 percent of the society's members said they were seeing much higher numbers of patients requiring correction of botched cosmetic procedures; the treatments in need of correcting all had been performed by nonphysicians.<sup>2</sup>

Most of these treatments, as you can see on the chart on page 10, are medical procedures that should be performed by a trained aesthetic-specialty physician, such as a plastic surgeon or dermatologist, who has received specialized training in the specific treatment he or she offers. There are a number of details you can investigate before you even get to the doctor's office.

## Ways to Get to Know Your Aesthetic-Specialty Physician

- ▶ Visit Web sites like those listed in the Resources on page 16 to learn more about the treatment you're considering.
- ▶ Talk with friends who have had the same treatments.
- ▶ Ask for references for the physicians you are considering for your treatment.
- ▶ Call the physician's office first to ask about credentials, or ask if he/she has a Web site with this information that you can review.
- ▶ Look for board certification in a specialty area, such as plastic surgery or dermatology.
- ▶ Ask your state medical board about the status of the physician's license and if there are any pending lawsuits against him or her.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR PROCEDURE

When you meet with the aesthetic-specialty physician, ask the following questions to help you make an informed decision about the treatment(s) you are considering:

- ▶ How many of these procedures do you perform a year?
- ▶ What is your complication rate?
- ▶ Will you personally treat me? If not, what are the qualifications of the person who will?
- ▶ What treatment/product do you recommend? Why?
- ▶ What are the potential benefits and risks of this treatment?
- ▶ What are the benefits and drawbacks of the other options?
- ▶ How much does the treatment cost? How many treatments will I need?
- ▶ Is the product/treatment FDA-approved specifically for cosmetic purposes?
- ▶ What should I do to prepare for the procedure?
- ▶ Are there any medications I should avoid before my treatment?
- ▶ Will I need an anesthetic? What type? Who will provide it?
- ▶ What will you give me for pain?
- ▶ What do I need to do following the treatment? Can I wash my face? Use creams or ointments? Wear makeup? Go out in the sun? Exercise?
- ▶ What can I expect after my treatment? How long before any irritation goes away (if any occurs)?
- ▶ How long will the results last?
- ▶ Do you offer follow-up appointments to discuss treatment outcomes?
- ▶ What results can I expect from this treatment?

## QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- ▶ What are the results I want to achieve from this treatment?
- ▶ Can I afford the desired treatment(s)?
- ▶ Have I set realistic expectations?
- ▶ Do I have the time for healing that this treatment may require?
- ▶ Do I understand all the treatment benefits and risks?



## AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

Aging, sunlight, smoking and dryness all contribute to the wrinkles, brown spots, large pores, redness and other imperfections women try to correct with nonsurgical aesthetic treatments. Preventing skin damage, then, boils down to:

- Wearing sunscreen that protects against UVA and UVB rays. Put it on just like moisturizer every morning (many moisturizers contain sunscreen), even if it's cloudy outside. Just sitting near a window or riding in a car exposes your skin to the sun's damaging effects.
- Quitting smoking and staying away from second-hand smoke.
- Washing your skin with gentle cleansers and using moisturizer in the morning and at night.

# Nonsurgical Aesthetic Treatments

The following provides a brief overview of the most commonly performed nonsurgical cosmetic procedures on the face and neck area. For more detail, see the chart on page 10.

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**Botox Cosmetic.** You might say that Botox Cosmetic (Botulinum Toxin Type A) launched the nonsurgical aesthetic treatment revolution. Approved by the FDA in 2002 for cosmetic use, Botox Cosmetic is a purified protein derived from the bacterium *Clostridium Botulinum*. It reduces muscle activity by blocking

nerve impulses that cause the squinting or frowning muscles to contract.<sup>3</sup> Botox Cosmetic is approved for the temporary treatment of the vertical lines between the eyebrows, often referred to as the “11.”

If you are considering Botox Cosmetic, make sure you visit a trained aesthetic-specialty physician for your treatment. Allergan, the manufacturer, only sells Botox Cosmetic to licensed health care professionals. Some states, however, allow nonphysicians, such as registered nurses or physician assistants, to administer the drug if a physician directly supervises them.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of who administers your treatment, always ask to see the vial and look for the manufacturer’s safety hologram to ensure you are treated with the authentic product.

And skip “Botox” parties. Botox Cosmetic is a medical product and should only be administered in a medical setting by a trained and licensed physician. Redness and bruising can result from drinking alcohol while receiving treatments. In fact, bruising may occur if you’ve had alcohol within the previous week or are taking anti-inflammatory medications when you have the procedure.



**Dermal fillers.** These injectable products fill fine lines and plump up wrinkles and folds to provide a smooth and natural look. They are among the most popular nonsurgical aesthetic treatments. Dermal fillers have certainly caught on: According to the ASPS, the use of hyaluronic acid dermal fillers—one category of soft tissue fillers—has increased 68 percent among women since 2004, making it the second most popular aesthetic injectable treatment behind Botox Cosmetic.<sup>5</sup>

Dermal fillers are different from Botox Cosmetic in that fillers are injected directly into wrinkles and lines, instantly adding volume. There are many dermal fillers to choose from, so make sure to ask your physician which type he/she recommends to ensure that you receive your desired results. Also, certain dermal fillers may work better in different people and for different areas, so you may need to try more than one before finding the best product for you.<sup>6</sup> Sometimes, physicians will use multiple products, depending on your needs, to obtain your desired result. You pay by the syringe, and several syringes may be required, so ask your physician for an estimated *total* cost before beginning your treatment.

**FDA-approved dermal fillers as of August 2007 include:**

- **Hyaluronic acid fillers.** Hyaluronic acid is a natural complex sugar found throughout all living animals. It retains water—absorbing more than 1,000 times its weight—thus adding volume to the skin's surface. As we age, however, concentrations drop, causing the appearance of wrinkles and folds. Dermal fillers are used to temporarily replace lost hyaluronic acid and restore skin volume. Brands include Eleveess, Hylaform, Hylaform Plus, Juvéderm Ultra, Juvéderm Ultra Plus, Perlane and Restylane.<sup>7</sup>
- **Collagen fillers.** Collagen is a protein substance found in all human and animal tissue. It's what makes your skin, bones and ligaments tough while providing structure. Zyderm and Zyplast cosmetic injections use collagen from cattle, called "bovine collagen." CosmoPlast and CosmoDerm injections use





highly purified human collagen, a natural protein that supports the skin and helps replenish collagen lost with time, exposure to sunlight and other factors.

- **Fat fillers.** Your doctor may also suggest a fat filler, in which fat is removed from another part of your body and injected into the wrinkle/line. Since the fat is of your own body, the risk of allergic reactions is very low. Although complications are rare, bleeding and infection can occur. After fat transfer, the injected site can remain swollen for several days.
- **Synthetic fillers.** These include the brands ArteFill, Radiesse and Sculptra, each composed of a different chemical compound.
  - **ArteFill** contains polymethylmethacrylate beads suspended in collagen and the numbing agent lidocaine. Polymethylmethacrylate is an acrylic cement often used in orthopedics. Unlike other fillers, ArteFill is not absorbed by the body.
  - **Radiesse** is an injectable calcium hydroxylapatite gel. Calcium hydroxylapatite is found in teeth and bones and is used for numerous medical applications including cheek, jaw, skull and chin implants.<sup>8</sup>
  - **Sculptra** is an injectable poly-L-lactic acid (PLLA). This compound is used in numerous medical products, such as stitches and screws used to repair broken bones. Although Sculptra has only been approved to restore shape and contour to the faces of those with AIDS, it is often used “off label” for cosmetic treatments.<sup>6,9</sup>

**Skin resurfacing.** These techniques are designed to smooth fine lines and wrinkles, reduce the appearance of brown spots, reduce sun damage and shrink pores. The level of intensity varies from mild chemical peels to laser resurfacing and laser pulses, and aftereffects range from mild redness to peeling and scabbing.

- **Chemical peels.** A chemical solution is “painted” onto your face to literally “peel away” damaged top layers of skin. Solutions range from mild alpha hydroxy acids to stronger acids like trichloroacetic acid (TCA) and phenol.<sup>10</sup>
- **Microdermabrasion.** A more superficial form of dermabrasion (described below), uses crystal or a diamond tip to lightly smooth the top layer of your skin.
- **Dermabrasion.** This treatment involves “sanding” the top layers of skin to reduce the appearance of imperfections such as acne scars or to smooth out fine wrinkles, like those around the mouth. It may be performed with a rough wire brush or a “burr” containing diamond particles that is attached to a motorized handle. The success of dermabrasion is highly dependent on the skill of the operator; it is rarely used. A similar treatment called dermaplaning uses a razor-like instrument that skims off the top surface of skin.<sup>11</sup>
- **Laser resurfacing.** In laser resurfacing, or laser peel, the doctor uses a carbon dioxide laser or an erbium Yag laser to remove areas of

damaged or wrinkled skin. New cells form as the skin heals, creating a smoother, tighter, younger-looking appearance.<sup>12</sup>

• **Fractional photothermolysis or fractional resurfacing.** This technology removes a small fraction of the surface of the skin during each treatment to resurface the skin. It is typically performed with Pixel and Fraxel lasers. This procedure is similar to a resurfacing laser, but with much less down time. The micro-injury causes the collagen to remodel.



- **Photorejuvenation/Intense pulsed light (IPL) laser.** This treatment uses intense pulsed light (IPL) laser to remove brown spots, reduce redness, shrink pores, clear broken blood vessels and improve sun-damaged skin.<sup>13</sup>
- **Plasma skin rejuvenation (Portrait).** This new procedure improves skin texture and reduces wrinkles and irregular skin coloring by delivering millisecond pulses of nitrogen plasma energy to the skin.<sup>14,15</sup>
- **Thermage.** Thermage uses radiofrequency technology to tighten and gently lift skin to smooth out wrinkles and renew facial contours. Unlike laser treatments, it can be performed on all skin types.
- **Accent.** Accent also uses radiofrequency technology to treat wrinkles and sagging skin. It can be used on all skin types and patients of nearly any age and on any part of the body where skin tightness is a concern.

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**Hair removal.** It's a rare woman who hasn't wished at least once for a magical potion that instantly and painlessly vanishes unwanted hair from her body forever. While no such thing exists (yet), treatments such as electrolysis or laser hair removal can keep you smooth longer than razors, tweezers or waxing. The two most common treatments are electrolysis, in which an electric current is used to permanently destroy the hair follicle; and laser treatments, which use the laser to destroy the follicle.<sup>16</sup>

# Nonsurgical Aesthetic Procedures Guide

Procedure	Best Usages	Time Required	Time Effects Last	Cost <sup>12,18</sup>	Best Professional to Perform Procedure	Risks	
Botox Cosmetic	Reducing the appearance of vertical lines between the brows	Average of 15 minutes	Up to 4 months	\$300 to \$500 per area of treatment	Plastic surgeon, dermatologist, other physician with special training in facial anatomy	Allergic reaction; headache; bruising if used while drinking alcohol; redness and numbness at the injection site; slight risk of paralysis of adjacent nerves <sup>19</sup>	
Chemical peel <sup>10</sup>	Blemishes, wrinkles, uneven skin pigmentation	15 minutes to 3 hours, depending on strength; 1 to 2 treatments usually required	Depends on strength of the peel	\$686 to \$870	Aesthetician for mild peels, plastic surgeon or dermatologist for stronger peels	Depends on strength of solution. Ranges from redness and irritation to uneven pigment changes and lighter skin that is no longer able to tan and is very sensitive to sun	
<b>Dermal Fillers</b>							
Collagen injections (CosmoDerm, CosmoPlast, Zyderm, Zypplast) <sup>6</sup>	Filling wrinkles, lines and scars on the face, neck and back	Less than 1 hour	Up to 6 months	\$390	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Small, temporary bumps beneath the skin	
Hyaluronic acid dermal fillers (Eleveess, Hylaform, Hylaform Plus, Juvéderm Ultra, Juvéderm Ultra Plus, Restylane, Perlane) <sup>6</sup>	Moderate to severe facial wrinkles and folds	Less than 1 hour	6 to up to 12 months	\$585	Aesthetic-specialty physicians including, plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Temporary injection site reactions such as redness, pain/tenderness, firmness, swelling, lumps/bumps, and bruising	
Fat injection <sup>7</sup>	Filling wrinkles, lines and scars on the face, neck and back	1 hour	3 to 6 months	\$1,380	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Swelling and puffiness in the donor site	
Synthetic Fillers	ArteFill (polymethylmethacrylate suspended in cow collagen)	Facial wrinkles and folds	Less than 1 hour	Up to 5 years <sup>6</sup>	\$500 or more <sup>6</sup>	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Allergic reaction possible; pre-allergy testing required; bruising, swelling, redness; in rare instances, small bumps beneath the skin
	Radiesse (calcium hydroxylapatite)	Facial wrinkles and folds	Less than 1 hour	1 to 2 years	\$850 or more	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Bruising, swelling, redness; in rare instances, small bumps beneath the skin
	Sculptra (poly-L-lactic acid)	Facial wrinkles and folds	Less than 1 hour	Up to 2 years	\$2,500 or more	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Bruising, swelling, redness; in rare instances, small bumps beneath the skin

Procedure	Best Usages	Time Required	Time Effects Last	Cost <sup>17,18</sup>	Best Professional to Perform Procedure	Risks
<b>Laser Resurfacing Procedures</b>						
Micro-dermabrasion <sup>18,20</sup>	Fine lines, crow's feet, age spots, acne scars	30 minutes to 1 hour; multiple sessions required	Temporary	\$162	Aesthetician, licensed cosmetologist, plastic surgeon, dermatologist	Very few complications; some mild redness; wear eye protection during the treatment
Dermabrasion <sup>11,18</sup>	Acne scars, fine wrinkles, sun-damaged skin	A few minutes to 1.5 hours; multiple sessions required	Long-lasting	\$1,586	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Change in skin pigmentation; rare instances of infection and scarring
Laser skin resurfacing <sup>12</sup>	Minimize fine lines, uneven pigmentation, facial scars; best for women with light skin	A few minutes to 1.5 hours	A year or more	\$2,160	Plastic surgeon	Burns, scarring, obvious lightening or darkening of the skin; may activate herpes virus infections or other infections
Photorejuvenation /Intense pulsed light (IPL) laser <sup>21</sup>	Lightening brown spots, removing broken capillaries, fading redness, rosacea	15 to 45 minutes; requires 1 to 3 treatments, about 3 weeks apart	Permanent	Varies widely	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Initially, skin may appear flushed, brown pigmented spots may appear darker and capillaries may be more visible. This fades with repeated treatments
<b>Radiofrequency Procedures</b>						
Thermage	Wrinkles. May also be used on hands, lips and eyelids.	20 minutes to 2 hours; results appear within 2 to 6 months after a single treatment	6 months to 2 years	\$2,000	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Rare complications include swelling, redness, bumps and blisters around the treated area, which typically disappear in a few days or weeks <sup>22</sup>
Accent	Wrinkles and sagging skin anywhere on the body	10 to 90 minutes; 4 to 6 procedures usually required	No long-term studies yet	\$500 average cost per area treated	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Redness, feeling of heat or dry skin for up to 48 hours
<b>Nitrogen Plasma Energy</b>						
Plasma skin rejuvenation (Portrait)	Skin texture, wrinkles, irregular skin coloring	15 to 40 minutes; 1 to 4 sessions	Up to 1 year	\$1,000 to \$4,000	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Mild redness and flaking at lower levels of treatment; at higher levels, skin turns brown and sheds in 3 to 5 days
<b>Hair Removal</b>						
Electrolysis	Unwanted hair	15 minutes to 1 hour; multiple sessions required	Eventually permanent	Varies widely	Electrologist	Pain, scarring and pigmentation changes
Laser	Unwanted hair	10 minutes to 2 hours; multiple sessions required	Eventually permanent	\$150 to \$800	Plastic surgeon or dermatologist	Pain, scarring and pigmentation changes

# Who's Who?

When choosing a professional for your cosmetic procedure, make sure you choose the right person for the right procedure. If you choose a physician, make sure that doctor is board certified in his/her specialty. You can learn if your doctor is board certified at [www.abms.org/login.asp](http://www.abms.org/login.asp).

- **Plastic surgeon.** Performs reconstructive and aesthetic procedures, both surgical and nonsurgical. Some plastic surgeons specialize in certain parts of the body, such as facial plastic surgery. Some only focus on cosmetic procedures. Should be board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery.



- **Facial plastic surgeon.** Specializes in facial reconstructive and cosmetic surgeries and other procedures. Should be board certified by the American Board of Otolaryngology and the American Board of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery.
- **Oculoplastic surgeon.** Has completed a residency in ophthalmology and a fellowship in ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery. Specializes in providing reconstructive and cosmetic procedures to the eye and around the eye.

## Word of Warning

*Because many nonsurgical aesthetic treatments can be uncomfortable, topical anesthetics are often used to numb the face. However, using them in large amounts, even if purchased over the counter, can lead to serious health problems, including irregular heartbeat, seizures, coma and even death. The FDA recommends you:*<sup>23</sup>

- ▶ Use a topical anesthetic containing the lowest dose of anesthetic drug to relieve your pain.
- ▶ Make sure you get specific instructions from your doctor on its proper and safe use.
- ▶ Understand that wrapping or covering the skin after applying the anesthetic can increase the risk of side effects.
- ▶ Use a topical anesthetic approved by the FDA (go to [www.fda.gov/cder/ob/default.htm](http://www.fda.gov/cder/ob/default.htm) and type in the product's active ingredient).

- **Dermatologist.** Should be board-certified by the American Board of Dermatology or the American Osteopathic Board of Dermatology. Provides all levels of dermatologic services, including in-office cosmetic treatments.
- **Aesthetic dermatologist.** Should be board-certified by the American Board of Dermatology or the American Osteopathic Board of Dermatology. Specializes in cosmetic dermatologic treatments, such as laser resurfacing and injections.
- **Aesthetician.** An aesthetician is trained to provide nonmedical skin care. They often work in spas (medical or otherwise) or dermatology offices performing facials and body wraps. They may also apply makeup, remove hair and care for the skin in a superficial manner. Most states license aestheticians, so check with your state licensing agency for specific requirements.
- **Electrologist.** An electrologist is specially trained in electrolysis. Most states regulate electrologists, requiring licensure and proof of training.

### What's a Medical Spa?

A medical spa can be anything from a physician's office staffed with licensed personnel and doctors and registered nurses to a storefront "day" spa in a strip shopping mall staffed with aestheticians. Just having the word "medical" in the name doesn't necessarily mean a physician or someone with medical training oversees it.

To avoid confusion and protect consumers, some states, such as Florida, require that a plastic surgeon or dermatologist supervises medical spas. Other states simply require that a physician oversees the services delivered and the nonphysician personnel. And still other states make no such requirements at all.

The key is to check what services the spa offers. If it offers medical services such as injectable fillers, Botox Cosmetic and dermabrasion, these treatments must be performed by a licensed physician or, in some states, a registered nurse or physician's assistant under the direct supervision of the physician—not by a cosmetologist, aesthetician or any other nonmedical specialist.

As always, ask about the training of the person performing the service; ask to see evidence of licensure; and, if the spa is overseen by a physician, ask about the doctor's credentials.

# Key Questions & Answers

## ABOUT NONSURGICAL AESTHETIC PROCEDURES

**Q** *What are the most important things I should know about nonsurgical aesthetic treatments?*

**A** Nonsurgical aesthetic treatments are medical procedures, and with any medical procedure there are potential risks. If you have realistic expectations of the results, understand that most treatments are not permanent and may need to be repeated in a few months or a year to maintain results, and carefully research your options and the doctor who will provide the treatment, you can achieve a natural, refreshed look that enhances your appearance.

If you are pregnant, nursing or have a medical condition, make sure you discuss the possible risks with your physician. Most products are not recommended for pregnant or nursing women.



**Q** *Are aesthetic injectable products, such as Botox Cosmetic and dermal fillers, safe?*

**A** Yes. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) reviews significant clinical data on the safety and effectiveness of all drugs and medical devices before approving them for marketing in the United States. Some products have years of clinical history for other conditions before being approved for cosmetic procedures. Botox, for instance, has been approved in the United States for more than 17 years to treat a variety of medical conditions.

**Q** *Is it really true that I can get a "lunchtime facelift?"*

**A** That depends on what treatment you're having. Some procedures, like dermal fillers and microdermabrasion, can provide smoother-looking skin in just a few minutes.

Others, such as dermabrasion and laser resurfacing, may take days or even weeks to heal.

**Q** *What is the best way to find a plastic surgeon or dermatologist who provides nonsurgical aesthetic treatments?*

**A** Go to the Web sites of the major plastic surgery and dermatologic societies listed in the “Resources” section. They all have searchable databases that enable you to find physicians in your area who provide cosmetic treatments. Also talk to friends who have had treatments done and to your primary health care provider for recommendations. Just make sure you check physician credentials carefully, ensuring they are qualified to perform the specific treatment.

**Q** *Even though many of these nonsurgical cosmetic treatments are less expensive than surgery, they're still too expensive for me. Is there any chance my insurance company will pay for part of it?*

**A** It's highly unlikely. Most insurance companies don't cover elective treatments like those discussed in this brochure. However, if you are having a filler for a medical reason, like restoring your appearance after an accident, or if

you have loss of fatty tissue related to AIDS, it might be covered. Also, your physician might offer financing options.

**Q** *The idea of getting shots in my face gives me the willies. But I really need to do something to bring back some freshness. Any suggestions?*

**A** Not all treatments require needles. Facial resurfacing with microdermabrasion, for instance, is needle-free. To reduce pain associated with aesthetic treatments, your doctor may use either a local anesthetic—to numb the area being worked on—or a general anesthetic, to put you totally out. If you opt for injections, most doctors use topical anesthetics to numb the area.

**Q** *How do I know if my doctor is qualified for the aesthetic treatment I want?*

**A** Ask your doctor about his or her credentials. Where was he/she trained? In what specialty did he/she do a residency? Did he/she do a specialty fellowship? What are his/her board certifications? Also ask where your doctor trained on the treatment you're having.

Even an injection of Botox Cosmetic requires training to ensure the product is injected into the correct place and in the correct way to achieve best possible treatment and avoid complications. If at any time you don't feel comfortable with the answers or the doctor, find someone else.

**Q** *My doctor says she has a "cheaper" alternative to the dermal filler I asked about. How can I find out about it?*

**A** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration must approve all medications and medical devices before they can be marketed in the United States. The FDA also approves all devices used in treatments like dermabrasion and laser therapies. Most dermal fillers are considered medical devices. To see if the product

your physician recommended is approved by the FDA, go to [www.fda.gov/cdrh/consumer/geninfo.html](http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/consumer/geninfo.html). To see if the FDA has approved a drug, go to [www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda](http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/drugsatfda) and type in the name of the drug.

**Q** *My doctor is recommending Sculptra dermal filler, but I see it was only FDA approved for people with AIDS. How can it be used for cosmetic reasons?*

**A** Once the FDA approves a medical device or drug and it is on the market, physicians can use it for any reason. This is called "off-label" use, and it is legal. Sculptra is often used off-label for cosmetic reasons other than its FDA-approved indications, as are other nonsurgical aesthetic products.

## Resources

The following provide consumer information about various cosmetic procedures, and most have searchable indexes of their members.

**American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery**

[www.aafprs.org](http://www.aafprs.org)  
703-299-9291

**American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery**

[www.aslms.org](http://www.aslms.org)  
715-845-9283

**American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery**

[www.asoprs.org](http://www.asoprs.org)  
952-646-2038

**American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery**

[www.surgery.org](http://www.surgery.org)  
888-272-7711

**American Society of Cosmetic Dermatology & Aesthetic Surgery**

[www.ascdas.org](http://www.ascdas.org)  
888-531-8330

**American Society of Plastic Surgeons**

[www.plasticsurgery.org](http://www.plasticsurgery.org)  
888-475-2784

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