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## Saving Face

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Saving face: In Part 4 of our Baby Boomers series, we tackle what some secretly think is more important than feeling good—looking great.

Would you pay to have your face injected with the same stuff that causes deadly food poisoning? All across North America, aging baby boomers are lining up for the privilege.

We're talking Botox, the miracle molecule that, when injected into a facial muscle, eliminates wrinkles due to muscle habits such as frowning and squinting. Pop into the doctor's office, a quick shot or two, and you can return to work minutes later, secure in the knowledge that your wrinkles and lines are about to disappear.

Non-surgical cosmetic procedures such as Botox are appealing to baby boomers who can't quite get their heads around a full-scale face lift, but have few qualms about an innocuous little shot. And from the look of dermatologists' appointment books, even mid-life "back-to-earthers" have few reservations when mucking with Mother Nature is so simple and virtually pain-free.

"The whole paradigm has changed," says Vancouver cosmetic ophthalmologist Jean Carruthers who, with her husband Alastair, pioneered the cosmetic use of Botox in 1987. "Baby boomers are living the longest of any generation in history. One hundred years ago, you'd be lucky to make it to 48, now you're going to make it into three figures. The fastest growing segment of the population is 75 and up," Carruthers



*"Overall people are more concerned about how they look," says David Zloty of the rising number of men and women seeking cosmetic surgery.—Photo: Stuart Davis, Vancouver Sun*

says. "It's all very well to say 'I'm going to age gracefully to 48,' and that's it. But if you're the same active, bright, enthusiastic person you were when you were 20 and you look in the mirror and say 'I'm going to get passed over for that promotion,' or 'People are going to think I'm too tired and too stressed,' it becomes a different matter."

Liposuction  
Botox  
Cosmetic Excisions

Collagen/Hylaform/Artecoll  
Hair Transplantation



## Saving Face, continued

Lines and wrinkles are "expressions that wear in because people are intelligent and they are focused on what they are doing, so they frown, or they purse or squint. All these things are, I think, evidence of facial focusing methods, but misinterpreted by the general public as frustration and anger. In men it's seen as mastery and leadership," says Carruthers who submits to Botox treatments herself. "I haven't frowned since 1987," she adds.

"Overall people are more concerned about how they look," says David Zloty, dermatologic surgeon and University of B.C. clinical assistant professor of dermatology. "They want their physical self to reflect how they feel."

Not surprisingly, one only has to look to California to see this trend taken to the extreme. While most clients are want to be sure their facial expressions remain natural after treatment, one Beverly Hills plastic surgeon, Paul Nassif, has been quoted as saying he has "a growing number of businessmen who actually want to have no facial expression in business meetings. They want to look cool."

Botox fever is sweeping North America in part from demand, but also because the product was approved for cosmetic use just this April by the American Food and Drug Administration, allowing manufacturer Allergan to start advertising campaigns. Health Canada approved Botox for cosmetic use a year earlier.

Botox use is up 2,500 per cent since 1999, Carruthers says. "It's gone from 100 injections a year to millions and is growing astronomically." California is also the hotspot for Botox parties where groups gather for treatment in a festive atmosphere com-

plete with cocktails and hors d'oeuvre. Botox parties appear to have limited appeal in Canada and Zloty says he's not aware of any being held in B.C."

Botox is a medical procedure we believe should be done in a medical situation by physicians trained in pharmacology and the clinical use of Botox, and who have a good understanding of skin and facial muscles," cautions Larry Warshawski, dermatological surgeon and University of B.C. clinical assistant professor of dermatology.

Warshawski, 53, has been using Botox on his own furrow lines twice a year for three or four years. Although any physician can administer Botox, because the protein affects facial expression, it is best performed by a surgeon with well developed aesthetic sensibilities, Carruthers says. But despite all the hoopla, Botox isn't the only non-surgical age-fighting option on the menu. Boomers paying the price for years of sun worship may choose from an ever widening range of quick and easy "lunch hour" treatments.

While Botox is good for lines created by muscle movement such as frowning and squinting, fillers such as hyaluronic acid and Artecoll more suitable for coarse lines, lines between the nose and mouth, and drooping at the angle of the mouth. Laser treatment and peels are good for fine wrinkles, fine lines and pigment irregularities.

Here's a run down of options:

### **Fat Autograft Muscle Injection (FAMI)**

*What it is:* A new method of injecting a patient's own fat on or near facial muscles to enhance the volume in faces that have narrowed with age.



## Saving Face, continued

**Risks:** Because the filler comes from the patient's own body, there is virtually no risk of allergic reaction. The risk of swelling and bruising is greater than with simple collagen and hyaluronic acid treatments. Blood clots may need to be drained by a physician. There is a theoretical long term risk of bruising or damage to nerves which supply the facial muscles.

**Cost:** It is still too early to tell how long results will last.

### Intense Pulsed Light

**What it is:** A form of "non-ablative" skin resurfacing. Traditional laser treatment removes the top layers of skin and the skin left behind grows in smoother and more evenly pigmented. Now a number of products claim results without removing the top layer of skin so the procedure can take place over a lunch hour, Zloty says.

**Risks:** "In well trained hands, the results are there and they are safe, but the results are subtle, and probably not to the extent claimed by manufacturers and in advertisements," says Zloty quoting recent studies. May also cause mild swelling, pigment changes, lightening or darkening of treated areas and scarring.

**Cost:** A full course of six to eight sessions costs \$1,200 to \$3,000.

### Botox

**What it is:** A neuro-toxin that temporarily weakens a muscle. Since there is no way to frown or squint, for instance, lines smooth out from disuse, and new creases are less likely to form. Botox takes effect three to seven days after treatment. Commonly used for furrows between eyebrows, horizontal lines on the forehead and crows' feet around the



*In a bid to erase facial wrinkles, Karen Beyer gets an injection of hyaluronic acid by dermatological surgeon David Zloty at the Skin Care Centre.—Photo: Stuart Davis, Vancouver Sun*

eyes. Botox will not improve wrinkles caused by sun exposure or tighten loose or sagging skin. Botulinum toxin has been used since 1980 to treat many muscle disorders such as lazy eye, eye ticks and uncontrolled blinking.

**Risks:** Soreness or mild bruising. Drug migration can cause temporary droopy brow or eyelid, or a headache.

**Cost:** Treatment for wrinkle lines between the eyebrows costs about \$360. The first injection lasts three to six months. Subsequent treatments can last six to eight months or longer as the muscle may atrophy.

### Artecoll (PMMA or polymethylmethacrylate microspheres)

**What it is:** Plexiglass beads surrounded by bovine collagen injected as a "permanent" filler. In theory, as the injected collagen is absorbed into the body, your own collagen begins to grow around the beads.



## Saving Face, continued

Expect some initial soreness. Good for melo-labial folds (from corner of nose to corner of mouth), marionette lines (from sides of mouth heading down to jaw line) and deeper acne scars.

**Risks:** Artecoll treatments are more technically demanding than other fillers. If too much is injected, it can create lumps that may last months or years. Occasionally, these lumps appear for no apparent reason.

**Cost:** To correct melo-labial lines, expect to pay about \$1,400 for treatment intended to last five to seven years.

### **Hyaluronic acid (trade names include Restylane, Perlane and Hylaform)**

**What it is:** A clear, biodegradable gel that is injected into the skin to smooth out wrinkles. Used in Canada since 1996. A local anaesthetic may be used for treatment on the lips. Good for lip augmentation, wrinkles filling and facial contours.

**Risks:** Swelling, redness, tenderness and acne-like formations are possible, though generally mild to moderate. Reactions last about two weeks.

**Cost:** Melo-labial treatment costs about \$800 and lasts about six months.

### **Collagen (trade names Zyderm and Zyplast)**

**What it is:** Collagen injections have been approved in Canada since the early 1980s. They are used to flatten deep nasal labial folds (nose to mouth) and fine lines around the mouth. Collagen can also elevate depressed scars and enhance lip size and contour.

**Risks:** Zloty says risk of mad cow disease is theoretically possible but of no concern as the product comes from a controlled North American herd.

**Cost:** Melo-labial treatment costs \$450 to 800 and lasts three to six months.

### **Silicone**

**What it is:** For superficial fine lines, silicone is “probably the best filler there ever was and still is,” Warshawski says.

**Risks:** In Canada, silicone has not been available for injection outside of clinical trial. Silicone lost favour due to problems with use in breast implants but recent reviews find it to be safe.

### **Better Skin Without Knives or Needles**

Skin will age much faster if you encourage it to. To fight back, avoid extensive sun exposure and don't smoke. “Both of those have been associated with aging changes,” says Vancouver dermatologist David Zloty.

Not keen on Botox, hyaluronic acid and other wrinkle erasing products? Creams and potions are the next best option. Prescription retinoic acids smooth out some fine wrinkles, even out pigment irregularities and improve textural feel of the skin. Deep lines are affected minimally, if at all. Five to 10 per cent concentrations of glycolic acid and alpha hydroxy acids are available over the counter and do the same thing to a lesser degree.

“Vitamin C derivatives such as vitamin E and all the other antioxidants are the least effective, but also the least expensive,” says Vancouver dermatologist Larry Warshawski. Nevertheless, “I use them,” Warshawski says. “If someone is concerned cosmetically, I think it's worth their time.”

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