

Thursday Styles

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Botox Plus: New Mixes For Plumping And Padding

By NATASHA SINGER

BABAK AZIZZADEH, a facial plastic surgeon in Beverly Hills, recently concocted a menu of "Cosmetic Cocktails." Although the frothy title might suggest intoxicating mixed drinks for patients who have just gone under the knife, the doctor's elixirs are not alcoholic. They are toxins and wrinkle fillers that he injects into patients' faces to smooth their age lines and puff up their cheeks.

Dr. Azizzadeh employs the bartending analogy to suggest the advantages of mixing his remedies. His typical cocktail might include Botox, a toxin that relaxes frown lines in the forehead; Sculptra, a synthetic filler, to bulk the cheeks; and Radiesse, a gel containing microscopic calcium particles, to fill wrinkles.

Billed as "filler face-lifts" or "tissue tailoring," multi-injection procedures are not merely the latest gimmick for cosmetic-treatment aficionados who have already tried every kind of laser and acid peel. They represent a kinder, gentler alternative to face-lifts, a way of plumping up rather than cutting away and hoisting sagging tissue. Their growing popularity is part of a trend toward injections and away from surgery.

In 2004 the number of face-lifts dropped by 3 percent from 2002 to about 114,000, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, while the number of Botox injections soared by 166 percent to nearly 3 million. Collagen injections were also up, to more than 500,000, an 18 percent increase, the society said.

Filler face-lifts offer only temporary results — lasting six months to two years, depending on which materials are used — but at \$2,500 to \$3,500 they are cheaper and less invasive than surgical face-lifts, which can run from \$10,000 to \$20,000. They also require less recovery time. And though their results are not as dramatic as a face-lift, injection cocktails, say doctors who offer them, are sufficient for patients in their 30's, 40's and 50's who do not have a lot of loose skin to cut away.

"Why go under the knife unnecessarily when you can have these treatments that make you look natural and youthful?" said Barbara Kaminsky, a Manhattan fashion stylist who for two years has been having her face injected with three different substances: Botox in her forehead and neck; Restylane in her cheeks and chin; and collagen in her lips.

"I'm a single woman over 50, but now I'm getting hit on by men who think I'm in my 30's or 40's," she said. "The only drawback is that, just like going to the dentist or the gym, with injectables you have to keep up a maintenance routine."

Some doctors say it is pointless to use so many different substances. "A wrinkle is a wrinkle, and you just fill it; you don't have to add whipped cream and chocolate sprinkles on top," said Marvin Rapaport, a clinical professor of dermatology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and a practicing dermatologist in Beverly Hills.

Others question the safety of cosmetic cocktails. Although the substances have been found to be generally safe when used individually, little research has been done to ascertain whether they might somehow mix together under the skin, potentially diminishing one another's effects or causing unforeseen problems.

Still, hundreds of early-adopter physicians and their patients are forging ahead. "Combining Botox with one or two injectable agents is becoming widespread," said Dr. Richard G. Glogos, a clinical professor of dermatology at the University of California, San Francisco. He is a consultant for Allergan, the maker of Botox.

This new approach to cosmetic enhancement is a recent development. Just four years ago only two substances were approved for injections: fat, to add volume, and collagen, to fill in wrinkles and acne scars.

Then in 2002 the arsenal began to expand when the Food and Drug Administration approved the cosmetic



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'Cocktail' procedures are catching on. But are doubles and triples really better than singles?

use of Botox. In 2003 the agency sanctioned Restylane, a gel that is used to fill wrinkles and folds around the nose and mouth and, off label, to plump cheeks and lips.

Last year the F.D.A. approved three new hyaluronic acids to treat wrinkles and folds: Hylalform, Hylalform Plus and Captique, which doctors also inject to fatten lips and structure cheeks. Doctors are also now using Sculptra (F.D.A. approved to rebuild the hollowed faces of AIDS patients) and Radiesse (approved to strengthen vocal cords) for facial enhancement even though they have not been sanctioned for cosmetic purposes.

"It's nice to have different products for different situations because each injectable works differently on each person," said Jeffrey S. Dover, a Boston dermatologist who himself prefers to use only two, Botox and Restylane. "It's like being a painter. You'd like a variety of colors at your disposal."

Fredric Brandt, Ms. Kaminsky's dermatologist, who practices in Manhattan and Miami, said he regularly injects two, three or four agents in one sitting. (He is a consultant for Allergan and for Medicis, Restylane's distributor.) In extreme cases, like "thin women in their 50's whose faces are caving in," Dr. Brandt said, he might use five.

Patricia Wexler, another Manhattan dermatologist, uses up to four substances, often on patients who have recently lost a lot of weight. Each agent serves a pur-

pose, she said. "First you use volumizers to restore the youthful contours of the face, then you use fillers that give definition and structure to wrinkles," she said.

Doctors do not know whether these agents mix together once they are in the skin, or what would happen if they do.

"There is no hard clinical data right now," said Nick Tei, the chief executive of Inamed, the manufacturer of the collagen fillers Zyderm, Zyplast, CosmoDerm and CosmoPlast. "We know physicians like to use collagen and Captique at the same time for different purposes, but we do not promote combination therapy."

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Alastair Carruthers, a dermatologist who is a consultant for Allergan, has begun to experiment with the simultaneous use of Botox and Restylane. In 2003 he published a study of 38 patients who were given this treatment. He found that their results lasted 32 weeks, almost twice as long as those who had been given Restylane alone.

But not all patients do as well. Dr. Carruthers said he is treating a patient whose previous doctor injected her face over a period of years with collagen, Restylane and Artecoll (a filler that is not approved in the United States) with unpleasant results.

"For the last six years I've had raised, very prominent blue lines that run from the folds of my nose down to my mouth," said the patient, 60, who would not disclose her name because she did not want to impugn the doctor who injected her. "But because I had so many injectables put in the same location, we can't tell what the cause is."

Side effects like bruising and skin irritation can occur even when only one filler is used. "If something goes wrong and you have injected four or five different foreign agents, how is the doctor going to be able to determine the cause of the problem and how to treat it?" asked Audrey Kunin, a dermatologist in Kansas City, Mo.

Six Injections And What They Do

DOCTORS started filling in facial wrinkles with collagen almost 25 years ago. Since then, they have started using a variety of other injectable substances that can flatten or fill lines and furrows. All of the following have been approved as safe by the Food and Drug Administration, though not necessarily for treating wrinkles.

1. BOTOX smoothes frown lines (those vertical furrows between the eyebrows) by paralyzing the muscles that cause them. The F.D.A. has approved its cosmetic use for this part of the face only, but some doctors also use it on horizontal forehead wrinkles, crow's-feet, neck bands (vertical cords that run below the chin) and the area under the nose to stretch out lines above the lip. If injected incorrectly, Botox can temporarily make the eyelids or lips droop. Treatments last up to four months.

Cost: \$376 to \$650 per area treated.

2. FAT, harvested via liposuction, can be purified and safely injected into cheeks, lips or temples because patients are never allergic to their own fat. Treatments last from six months to several years.

Cost: \$300 to \$1,300 for one treatment (not including the liposuction fee). Several treatments may be needed.

3. COLLAGEN is a fibrous protein that is used to fill wrinkles and acne scars as well as plump lips. Zyderm and Zyplast, made of bovine collagen, can cause itching, swelling and other allergic reactions, so doctors test potential patients to see if they are sensitive. CosmoDerm and CosmoPlast, made of human collagen, usually do not cause such reactions. Treatments last three to six months.

Cost: \$389 to \$550 per syringe of Zyplast and Zyderm; \$600 to \$850 for CosmoDerm and CosmoPlast. One to two syringes are used for each treatment.

4. RADIESSE (formerly known as Radiesse) is approved by the F.D.A. to strengthen vocal cords, but a few cosmetic doctors have been using it experimentally to fill in cheeks, chin and deep wrinkles. Made of microscopic calcium particles suspended in a gel, it may cause tiny lumps or bumps, doctors say. The effects are expected to last one to three years.

Cost: \$900 to \$2,000 per treatment.

5. RESTYLANE, a spongy gel made of hyaluronic acid, is used to fill moderate to deep facial folds or off label, to plump lips. Restylane often causes bruising and swelling for a few days. Treatments last up to six months. Hylalform and Captique, other hyaluronic acids, cause less swelling, but doctors say they last only four to five months.

Cost: \$542 to \$1,300 per syringe for Restylane, \$600 to \$850 for Hylalform and Captique. One to two syringes are used for each treatment.

6. SCULPTRA is a synthetic compound that has been approved by the F.D.A. to treat facial wasting in AIDS patients. Some doctors use Sculptra off label to fill hollow cheeks associated with ordinary weight loss or aging, but others, including Richard G. Glogos, a San Francisco dermatologist, question whether it might cause inflammation in people with healthy immune systems. Treatments last up to two years.

Cost: \$933 to \$1,500 per area treated. Three treatments are usually needed.

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Cosmetic treatments sometimes have aesthetic side effects, which is why potential patients are often advised to take care that the doctor they choose shares their sense of how much work is too much.

"I think of an aging face as a sagging sofa which has to be restuffed so the pillows fluff up to their beautiful original shape," Dr. Brandt said. "But a sofa can be over-stuffed by someone overzealous." He has a nickname for those unfortunate patients who end up on a cosmetic cocktail bender. "I call them the 'big giant heads.'"