

More From the Latest South Beach Symposium

By Dr. William Carter



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Since 1999 Dr. Carter has been extensively involved in all office-based things having to do with appearance optimization. He has performed over 35,000 Botox treatments and thousands of laser and filler procedures. He maintains active practices in Lancaster, Dauphin, and York counties.

Last issue we talked about some of the recent developments in the aesthetic world regarding acne, hyperpigmentation, hair loss, and the various FDA approved botulinum toxin-A products. This time we will finish my synopsis of the symposium by discussing some of the latest thoughts on fillers and non-invasive ways to change skin texture and tightness.

Facial fillers in the U.S. can be broadly classified into two categories: those that give immediate improvement but little collagen stimulation, and those that give maximal collagen stimulation but may or may not give immediate visual improvement. In this latter group we have four or five products. Radiesse®, made by Merz Aesthetics, is composed of calcium hydroxyapatite and carboxymethylcellulose. It gives an immediate improvement in appearance and leads to prolonged collagen stimulation. In most people the associated visual improvement in volumization will last between eight to

twelve plus months. It cannot be used in all areas of the face (e.g. lips).

Sculptra®, by Valeant Aesthetics, is injectable poly-L-lactic acid. This product is interesting because it does not give any immediate volume correction. It is however probably the very best agent thus far to produce a long-term improvement in volumization after a series of two

to four treatments. Durations of two years or longer are not uncommon. There are some experts in the field who believe that some of the benefit can even be lifelong.

Silikon 1000, by Alcon Laboratories, is FDA approved for use in certain retinal detachment repairs. It has been used off label by some for permanent volumization and scar improvement. This product scares most of us and is included here only for completeness.

ArteFill®, by Suneva Medical, is composed of 80% bovine collagen and 20% polymethyl methacrylate microspheres. This product, like Silikon 1000, is thought to be potentially problematic. Although it also is permanent, most of us feel the risk is not worth the benefit. The nearest injectors of ArteFill® are located in Maryland.

Very recently there has been renewed interest for injecting platelet-rich plasma (PRP) into the dermis of the skin for a one-to two-year benefit in skin texture, strength, and thickness. Platelets, harvested from a person's own blood, trigger the release of multiple growth factors which are thought to induce these beneficial changes. You will be hearing about the "Vampire Facelift" which is done with a combination of Juvéderm® and PRP. This was recently performed on Kim Kardashian. Her treatment can be seen on YouTube. I recently did a facial PRP dermal infusion treatment on a coworker and friend of mine utilizing the Selphyl platelet-rich fibrin matrix (PRFM) system. Aesthetic Factors devised this system.

Usually, two treatments are done one month apart to give an optimal improvement that lasts between one and two years. Some practitioners recommend annual treatments. I will likely be doing more and more of these treatments since here in Lancaster County we are all about whatever is perceived as "natural." What could be more natural than our own blood products?

Certainly there is nothing new about non-invasive ways to improve the texture and tightness of the skin. What is new are the many ways this can be accomplished. Besides the now well accepted multiple ablative and non-ablative lasers we have been using for years, there now are radio frequency devices (fractionated and non), focused ultrasound, dermal needling, and even units that even combine different modalities. There is even a new tattoo removal laser by Cynosure called the PicoSure™ that uses picosecond pulses of an alexandrite laser instead of the more standard nanosecond laser technique. This ultra short pulse duration enables more comfortable, more effective, and shorter treatment courses for tattoo removal.

Well, that's all for now. Certainly, there is a continual stream of exciting developments in the office-based aesthetic area, so keep your eyes and ears open! 🌟



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